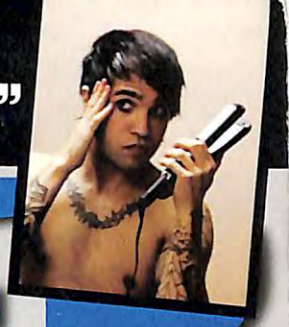
ON THE ROAD WITH **FALL OUT BOY** "I'M PRETTY MUCH HALF-GAY"



BLENDER

YOUR MUSIC BUDDY

HATE DUBYA?
HAVE WE GOT A BAND FOR YOU: AGAINST ME!

SCOTT WEILAND
"I BELIEVE IN THE DEVIL"

33 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT 50 CENT

SUPERNERDS AND POWERGEEKS
THE (PIMPLY) FACES BEHIND YOUR FAVORITE WEB SITES

EVIL SUITS!
CHEATING BOYFRIENDS!
FICKLE TWEENS!

Kelly Clarkson
FIGHTS FOR HER LIFE

THE POLICE
AMY WINEHOUSE
AND
THE WORST COMEBACKS EVER!

AUGUST 2007
BLENDER.COM

$4.99US $5.99CAN
08>
0 71658 03911 7

TUESDAYS 10/9c ★ PREMIERES AUGUST 7
TLC
tlc.com/la-ink
© 2007 DCL

LA Ink
Starring
Kat Von D!

"I'M IN MY 20S. I'M A DIFFERENT PERSON EVERY DAY."

KELLY CLARKSON (P. 68)

PLAN A

Don't blame us for third-party content or services. Our super-advanced 3G service is available in select locations in the red states, the blue states and even the green states. Some features are network, condition and device dependent and are not available in all areas or on all devices. Service is subject to Helio's Membership Terms. Some restrictions apply, but not too many. See your Helio representative for the few that do. Some features may not be available at this time, but are coming soon. Helio, the Helio logo, Ocean and "Don't Call It a Phone" are trademarks of Helio LLC. AOL is a registered trademark of AOL LLC and all other marks are the property of their respective owners. For more information on Helio, visit www.helio.com. And congrats, you're the only person who's made it this far. ©2007 Helio LLC.

PLAN B

CALL IT OCEAN.™ DON'T CALL IT A PHONE.™

Ocean is the world's first dual-slider with both a numeric keypad and a separate full QWERTY keyboard. Designed to make the perfect call, crank out an email or just send your friend a quick instant message, Ocean is without equal. Take its new HTML browser for a test drive on an advanced nationwide 3G network and you'll see that Ocean delivers a superior web experience paired with smart technology that delivers all of your Yahoo,® AOL,® Windows Live,™ Gmail™ accounts and more into a single inbox. You can even sync your Microsoft® Office Outlook® email, contacts and calendar right there on your Helio. Just one more way that Ocean makes you look like a mastermind.

www.helio.com

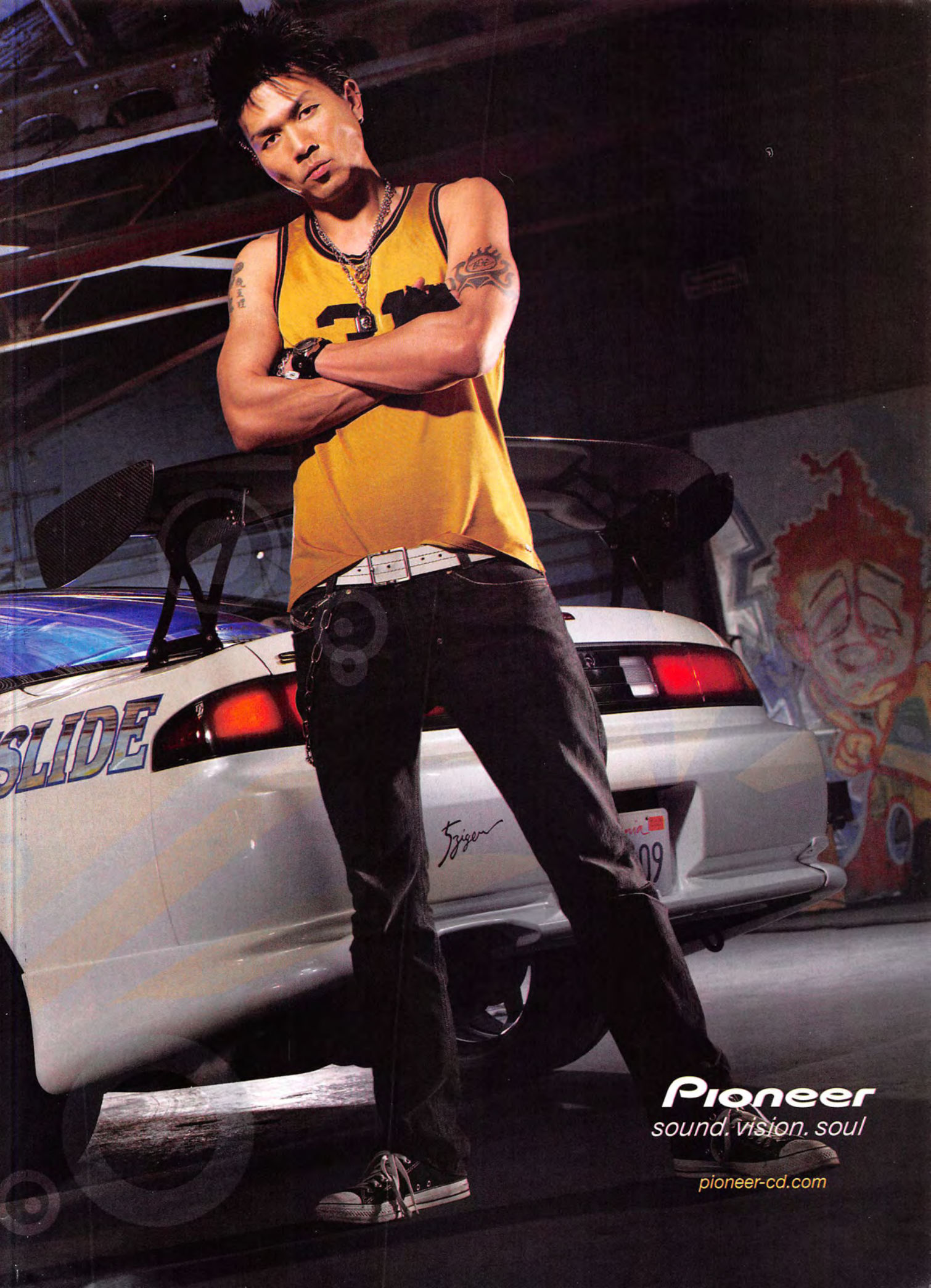
Best Seat in the House

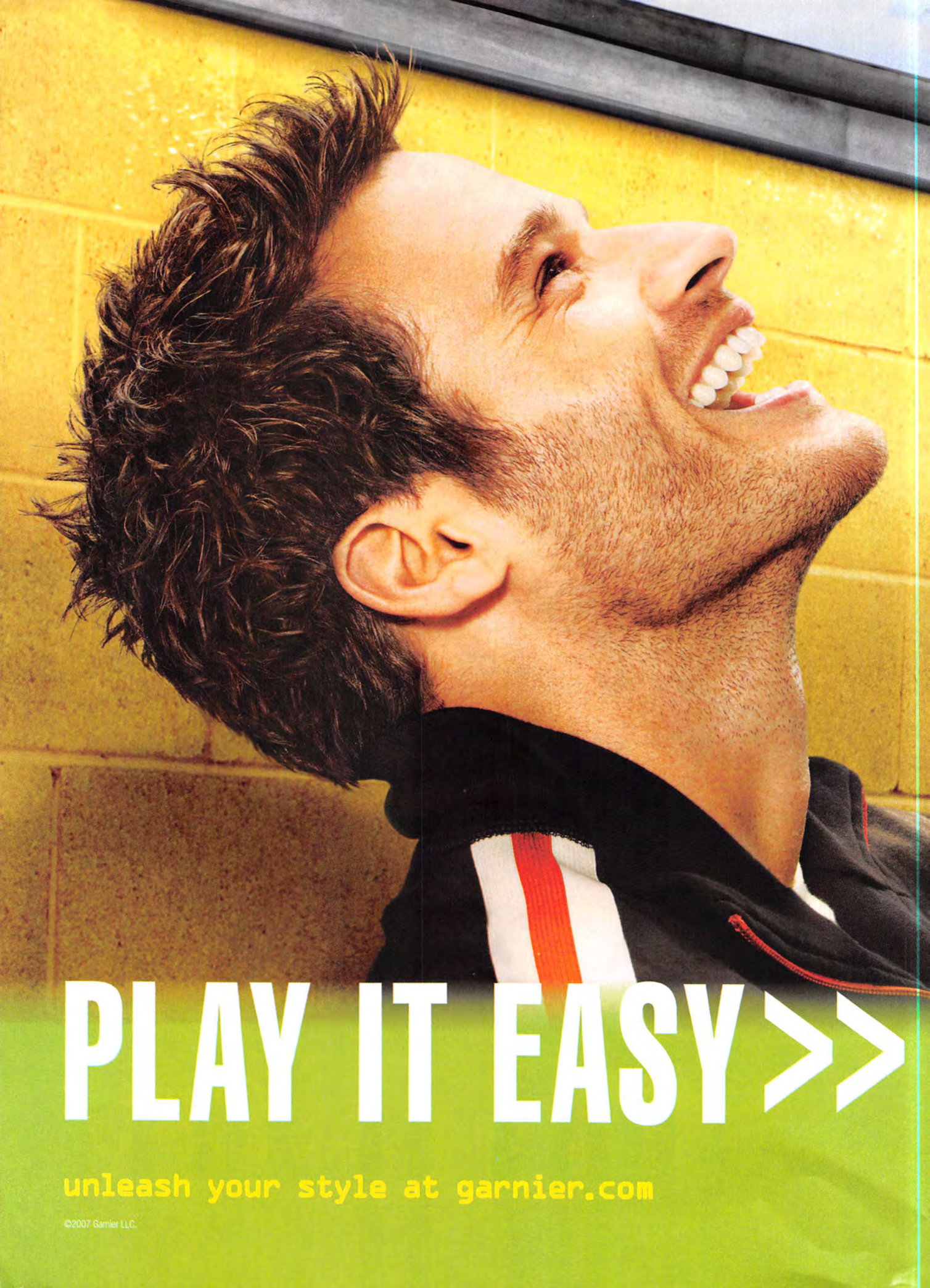
Best Seat in the House means full access. And with Pioneer's CD receiver, you get the full experience you want in your car. Direct connect your iPod® device, MP3 player or Mass-storage device*, or go wireless with optional Bluetooth® technology. All with the very best sound.

Let Pioneer help you create that experience. Put information, communication and entertainment right in front of you...and everything else behind.

DEH-P6900UB CD Receiver
Built-in USB Control.
Direct, high-speed,
adapter-free connection.
Extraordinary sound.

*Not every MP3 device is compatible. See more details in Pioneer website. Bluetooth wireless technology requires optional CD-BTB200 adapter, sold seperatly.
iPod® is a trademark of Apple Computer, Inc. registered in the U.S. and other countries. Bluetooth® trademarks owned by Bluetooth SIG, Inc. ©2007 Bluetooth SIG, Inc.
PIONEER is a registered trademark of Pioneer Coproration. ©2007 Pioneer Electronics (USA) Inc.


SLIDE
Pioneer
sound. vision. soul
pioneer-cd.com


PLAY IT EASY >>
unleash your style at garnier.com
©2007 Garnier LLC.

new

GARNIER FRUCTIS STYLE

Play Style

FRUIT MICRO-WAXES

- Give hair the texture & flexibility to sculpt choppy, destructured styles.
- Infused with fruit micro-waxes, a first from Garnier.

all play >> no work

STYLE IT MESSY

GARNIER
Take care.

AT YOUR SERVICE

THE BLENDER BIBLE*

INSTANT POP OMNISCIENCE, IN HANDY FOLD-OUT FORM

DOWNLOAD THESE

SONG OF THE MONTH

1 LIL WAYNE
"I FEEL LIKE DYING" *(ONLINE)*

There's stoner rap, then there's Ecstasy-marinated-in-codeine-and-served-between-two-sheets-of-acid rap. This is the latter.

2 FABOLOUS FEAT. PUSHA T
"JOKES ON YOU" *DEF JAM*

Dane Cook, D.L. Hughley, Richard Pryor—no comedian goes un-shouted-out in this laugh-themed dissfest.

3 BAT FOR LASHES
"WHAT'S A GIRL TO DO?" *SHE BEAR/ECHO*

Sexy goth pop from (yet another) spunky Brit chanteuse. Bonus: Peep the spooky, BMX-stunt-filled video.

"I have the illustrated *Wind in the Willows* on my back!"

4 CHROMEO
"FANCY FOOTWORK" *VICE*

More dork disco from these Moroder-obsessed Montreal hams.

5 THE DREAM
"SHAWTY IS DA SHIT" *DEF JAM*

This Atlanta R&B smoothie helped write "Umbrella"—on this airy solo stab, he advocates generous stripper tipping, ogling.

6 ANIMAL COLLECTIVE
"PEACEBONE" *DOMINO*

These Baltimore avant oddballs show no sign of getting any less insane.

7 HURRICANE CHRIS
"A BAY BAY" *POLO GROUNDS/J*

The next great nonsense rap-novelty. This one's either about a body of water that forms an indentation on a shoreline or about greeting people in the club.

8 KELLY CLARKSON
"BE STILL" *RCA*

A Fleetwood Mac–styled slow jam, ideal for knocking boots in a delicate sort of way. One of the few bright moments in her snarling new set.

9 GREEN DAY
"WORKING CLASS HERO" *WARNER BROS.*

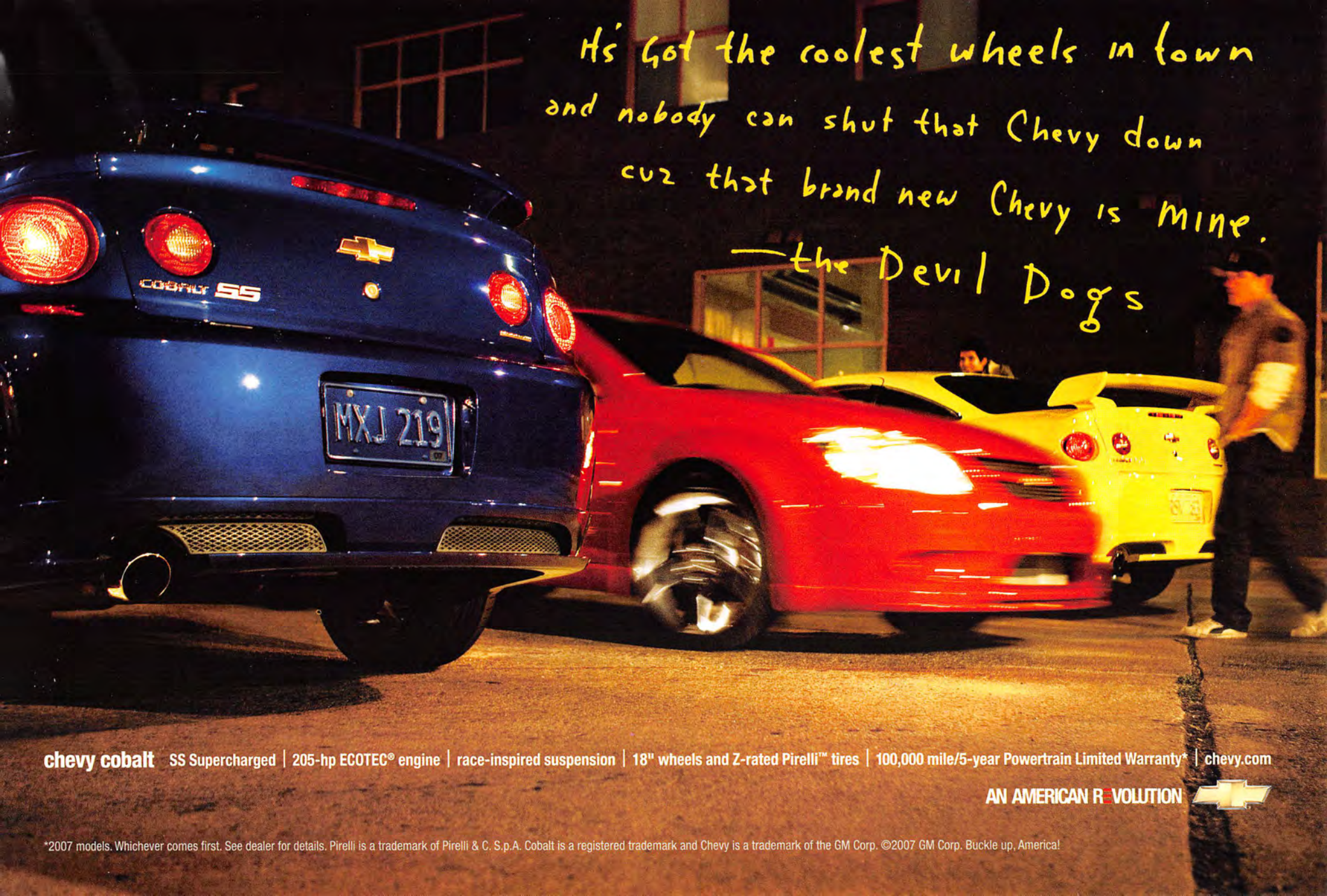
Billie Joe and Co. deliver a cranked-up take on John Lennon's bitter, anti-heroic classic. Profits from the single go to Amnesty International's Campaign to Save Darfur—so download legally for once, ya bums!

10 AGAINST ME!
"WHITE PEOPLE FOR PEACE" *SIRE*

Florida agit-punks seethe about warmongering generals and civilian casualties with a gorgeously wordy refrain and a riff that would make Woody Guthrie piss his dungarees.

LIL WAYNE: CLAY PATRICK MCBRIDE; ARMSTRONG: BARRY KING/WIREIMAGE

*NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH THE REAL ONE


He's got the coolest wheels in town
and nobody can shut that Chevy down
cuz that brand new Chevy is mine.
—the Devil Dogs
COBALT SS
MXJ 219
chevy cobalt SS Supercharged | 205-hp ECOTEC® engine | race-inspired suspension | 18" wheels and Z-rated Pirelli™ tires | 100,000 mile/5-year Powertrain Limited Warranty* | chevy.com
AN AMERICAN REVOLUTION
*2007 models. Whichever comes first. See dealer for details. Pirelli is a trademark of Pirelli & C. S.p.A. Cobalt is a registered trademark and Chevy is a trademark of the GM Corp. ©2007 GM Corp. Buckle up, America!

BOOKMARK THESE

R. KELLY'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Relive classic R. Kelly videos like the epic "Down Low (Nobody Has to Know)" and watch candid clips featuring the man admitting to his weakness for cookies. Surprisingly, that's not a sex metaphor—he just really likes cookies.

http://www.youtube.com/RKellyTV

VBS.TV

From the unlikely investigative reports—see the excellent "Heavy Metal in Baghdad" series—to offbeat travelogues to celebrity-assisted "Dos and Don'ts & Friends" fashion snark attacks, this online spin-off of downtown rag *Vice* gets better by the week.

http://www.vbs.tv

R. Kelly contemplates a double entendre involving "anything" minutes."

PLAY THESE

GUITAR HERO ENCORE: ROCKS THE '80S

ACTIVISION; PS2

It may be a stopgap until *Guitar Hero III* comes out, but when it's this enormously fun a stopgap, who cares? Pick up your plastic guitar and "shred" to '80s tunes by everyone from Dio to Oingo Boingo.

MARIO STRIKERS CHARGED

NINTENDO; Wii

Bend it like Mario in this sometimes incomprehensible, yet perversely addictive, take on soccer. Crazy power-ups like the five-ball Mega Strike make that World Cup thing seem like even more of a snooze-athon.

Mario Strikers Charged: Buff the Magic Dragon, steroid abuser.

SEE THESE

JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE

Come for "My Love." Stay for the slim chance of "Dick in a Box." Justin's on the road from **August 6** in Memphis through **September 17** in L.A.

LCD SOUNDSYSTEM

They put out the disco-rock album of the year so far. Come help them salute the cowbell **August 3** at Lollapalooza or **September 16** at Austin City Limits.

"Who replaced the stage with these hot coals?!"

11 RILO KILEY
"BREAKIN' UP" *WARNER BROS.*

Jenny Lewis and fam are reborn ... as a disco band!

12 KEVIN MICHAEL
"WE ALL WANT THE SAME THING" *ATLANTIC*

A spectacularly 'fro'd pop-soul newbie says hello.

13 T.I. FEAT. WYCLEF
"YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS"
GRAND HUSTLE/ATLANTIC

With an ex-Fugee in tow, the king of the South returns with spiraling strings and shotgun blasts.

14 THE GO! TEAM
"GRIP LIKE A VICE"
MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES

The Internet's favorite pastiche-posse serves up more B-boy breakbeats, supersonic squawks and overcaffeinated-pep-squad chants.

15 KANYE WEST
"US PLACERS" *[ONLINE]*

From an appetite-whetting mix tape, a moody, navel-gazing Kanye track featuring Lupe Fiasco, Pharrell and one wigged-out Thom Yorke sample.

16 DIZZEE RASCAL FEAT. UGK
"WHERE DA G'S" *XL*

England's illest meets Houston's trillest for this slinking, I-don't-believe-you diss track about wankstas on both sides of the Atlantic.

17 THE NEW PORNOGRAPHERS
"MY RIGHTS VERSUS YOURS" *MATADOR*

Vancouver power-pop crew dissects legal niceties and finds "empires in rags" over hooky, sunny guitar strums.

18 UGK FEAT. OUTKAST
"INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS ANTHEM" *JIVE*

A soul-drenched ode to/repudiation of holy matrimony, with a video featuring André 3000 in a kilt. Call it *My Big Fat Freak Wedding*.

19 HOT HOT HEAT
"GIVE UP?" *SIRE*

Some Killers-esque new-wave melodrama from these Canuck fops. Pass the bolo ties!

20 JUNIOR SENIOR
"CAN I GET GET GET"
CRUNCHY FROG

Blender's fave half-gay Dane disco duo is back—Danish, half-gay and disco-y as ever!

SPOON: AUTUMN DE WILDE; BEYONCÉ: JO HALE/GETTY IMAGES; OPPOSITE: TIMBERLAKE: GARY HERSHORN/REUTERS/CORBIS.

SPIN THESE

1 1990S
COOKIES *ROUGH TRADE*

Dweeby Friends of Franz kick out bubbly new wave and drunk disco.

2 SPOON
GA GA GA GA GA *MERGE*

The Austin, Texas, indie dons fine-tune their sound, creating an unstoppable soul-rock machine.

3 TEGAN AND SARA
THE CON *SANCTUARY*

This pixie-voice sister act serves up deceptively cute, deeply worried songs about love's anxious moments.

Spoon, stars of *Edward Olivehands*.

4 BRAD PAISLEY
5TH GEAR *ARISTA NASHVILLE*

A near-perfect fifth album from this West Virginia–born, zinger-packing country superstar, who jabs at metrosexuals and MySpace geeks alike.

5 DMX
THE DEFINITION OF X *DEF JAM*

Before he was a law-breaking punch line, DMX was a law-breaking hitmaker. This best-of captures him in all his psychotic glory.

WATCH THESE

Beyoncé forgets the rest of "Y.M.C.A."

MOVIE

HOT ROD

From *SNL* wunderkind Andy Samberg—the man who brought you "Lazy Sunday"—comes a phenomenally retarded movie about an aspiring, accident-prone motorcycle stuntman. Don't try this at home. Costarring Isla Fisher and Ian McShane. **Out August 3.**

TV

MISSION: MANBAND

VH1's latest C-list circus, in which four has-beens from 'N Sync, 98 Degrees, LFO and Color Me Badd gather under one roof (in Orlando, Fla, natch) for another shot at stardom. Can they overcome alcoholism, cancer and misguided facial-hair choices? **Premieres August 6.**

DVD

BEYONCÉ: B'DAY ANTHOLOGY VIDEO ALBUM

The world's reigning power diva tangles with a giant feline, impersonates her boyfriend with unbelievable accuracy, gyrates next to Shakira and, most shockingly, takes off some of her makeup in this 12-track video collection.

ONLINE

"AUNT JACKIE"

The new "Chicken Noodle Soup" is here, courtesy of Harlem MCs Jason Fox and the Hood Presidents—all about keeping it gloriously, dorkily old school.

Search: "Aunt Jackie" + "Jason Fox"

CONTENTS

08.07

68
KELLY CLARKSON
The record company wanted her to make radio-friendly hits crafted by Swedish songwriters. She wanted to put out a dark breakup album. For better and for worse, Kelly Clarkson did it her way.

80
AGAINST ME!
They're punks who make Rage Against the Machine sound like John Edwards Democrats. But now Against Me! are major-label recording artists, too. How will they reconcile their bomb-throwing leftist ideals with life in the mainstream?

84
MIRANDA LAMBERT
Nashville's hottest hitmaker enjoys a good drink, is licensed to carry a concealed weapon and once slayed an eight-point deer with a bow and arrow. A revealing Q&A with the Nuge's dream girl.

86
33 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT 50 CENT
He once dressed as a woman to escape the cops. He'll play your Bar Mitzvah for $500,000. And 31 other amazing facts about rap's biggest star.

93
THE POWERGEEK 25
Meet the online-music elite! Starring Steve Jobs, MySpace Tom, Pete Wentz, Perez Hilton and "Oinkylicious" Alan.

ON THE COVER
KELLY CLARKSON

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
MARTIN SCHOELLER

Styling: Laury Smith for Margaret Maldonado. Hair: Frankie Payne for Luxe. Makeup: Ashley Donovan. Bustier: Dolce & Gabbana. Necklace: Royal Order. Bracelet: Loree Rodkin. Gatefold: Bustier: Dolce & Gabbana. Ring: Loree Rodkin.

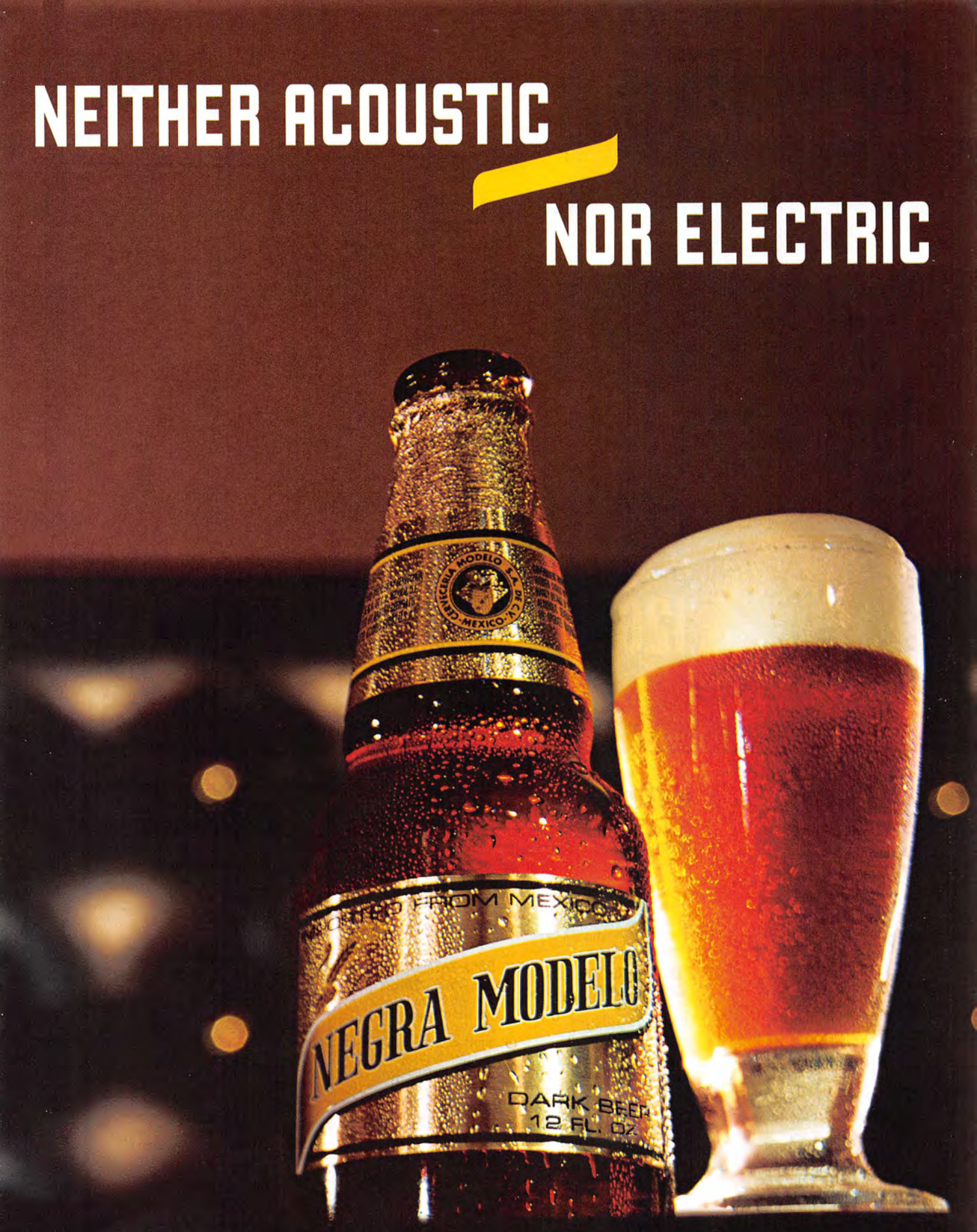
TUNE IN!
BE SURE TO LISTEN TO
THE BLENDER DOWNLOAD 15
SATURDAYS AT 12 P.M. EST ON MAXIM RADIO, CHANNEL 108 ON SIRIUS.

86
"RIGHT AFTER I COMMITTED TO MUSIC, I STARVED."
50 CENT

JASON NOCITO

COVER: BENJAMIN LOWY (WENTZ); CHARLES NELSON REILLY (SPINE); JONATHAN GREEN/GLOBE PHOTOS.

NEITHER ACOUSTIC NOR ELECTRIC

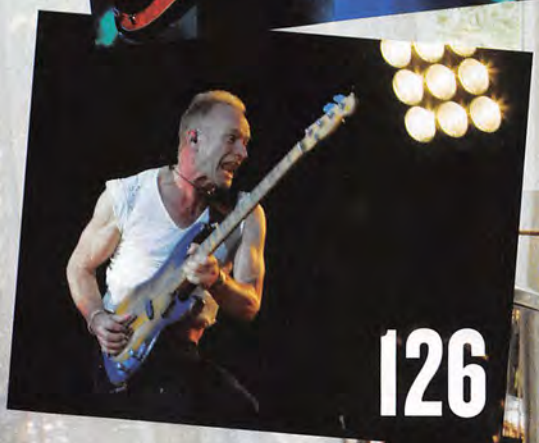


Full flavored yet uncommonly smooth. A beer that defies category. A beer of its own. **UNWRAP *the* MYSTERY™**

Relax Responsibly IMPORTED BY CROWN IMPORTS LLC, CHICAGO, IL 60603

CONTENTS

08.07



REGULARS

8 BLENDER BIBLE

20 LETTERS

29 BURNER
Akon hurls a teen from the stage, and Modest Mouse's Isaac Brock gets bottled. Plus, on the road with Fall Out Boy

136 WHO DOES PATTON OSWALT THINK HE IS?
The chubby comic professes his love for shotguns, 'shrooms and giant women.

INSIDER

55 COMEBACK DO'S AND DON'TS
As Britney prepares her big comeback, she ought to take a look at the folks who did it right (Elvis, Aerosmith) and those who did not (Jewel, Vanilla Ice).

58 DEAR SUPERSTAR: SCOTT WEILAND
The Velvet Revolver frontman revisits his vicious spat with Axl Rose and reveals two drugs he's never done—but wishes he had.

64 THE GREATEST SONGS EVER: "WE'RE AN AMERICAN BAND"
How Grand Funk triumphed over their many haters and captured the spirit of post-Vietnam Middle America

66 ASK BLENDER
Why Kurt Cobain hocked a giant loogie on Elton John's piano

THE GUIDE

109 NEW RELEASES
T.I., Spoon, Interpol, Brad Paisley and more

120 REISSUES
DMX, Garbage, Pretenders, the Traveling Wilburys and more

123 BACK CATALOGUE: ARETHA FRANKLIN
The second of two installments in our review of the Queen of Soul's career is a tale of dizzying highs (the best-selling gospel album ever) and abysmal lows (formulaic disco dreck).

126 LIVE
The Police

128 MOVIES
Superbad, The Ten and more

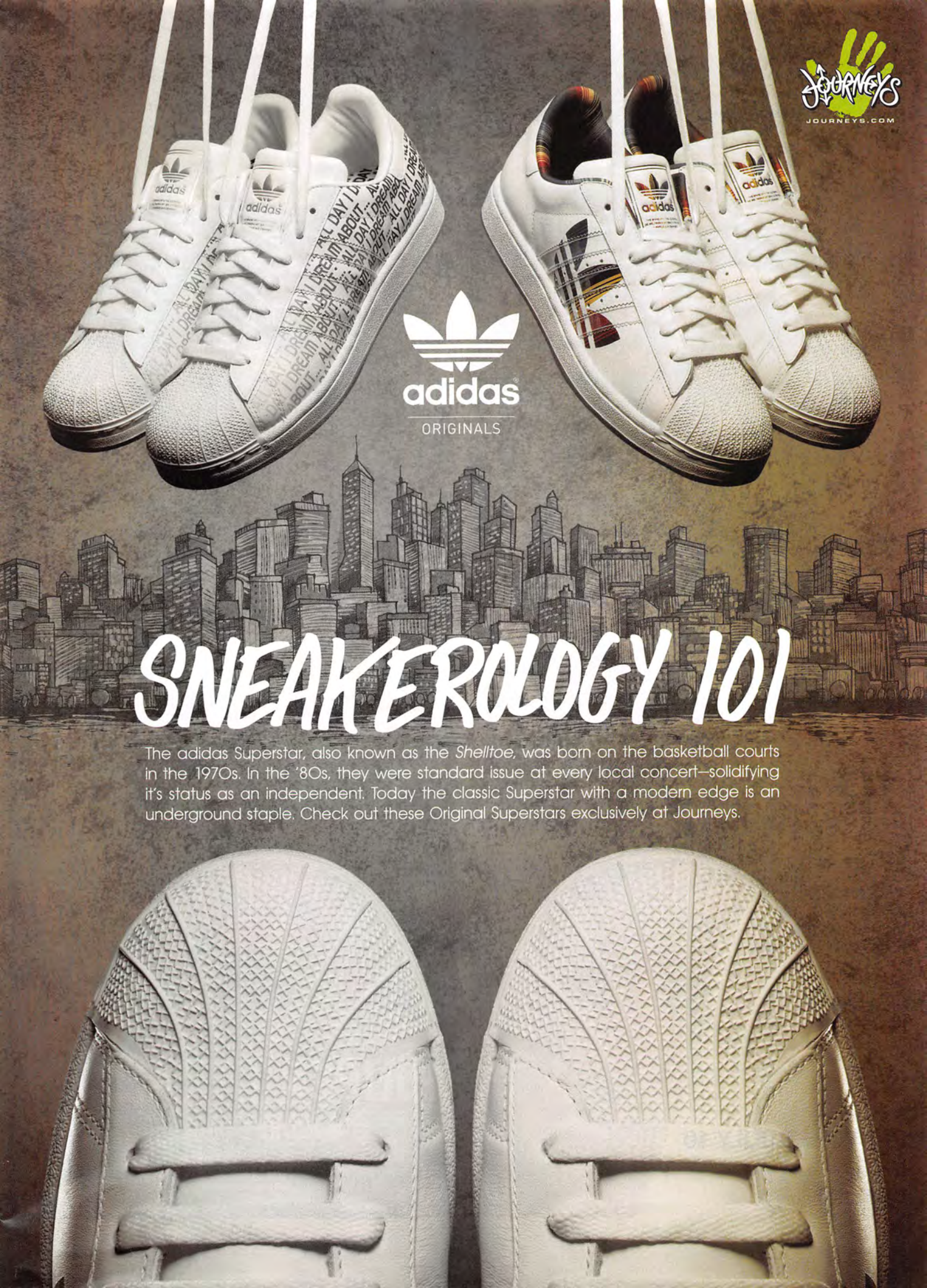
131 GAMES
NCAA Football 08, Transformers: The Game and more

ARTIST INDEX

Where to find your favorite performers in this month's *Blender*

50 CENT 86
ADAMS, RYAN 44
AGAINST ME! 8, 80
ANDRÉ 3000 (BRINGING SEXY BACK ... FOR THE VEGETARIAN SET) 9, 30
CAREY, MARIAH 32, 55
CRIBS, THE 40, 110
CRISS, PETER 32
DMX 9, 120
GRAND FUNK 64
HAMMER 57
INTERPOL 114
LAMBERT, MIRANDA 84
OSWALT, PATTON (ON BEING THE HOTTEST LESBIAN ON TV) 136
POLICE, THE 126
T.I. 9, 109
USED, THE 132
WEILAND, SCOTT (OPENS UP ABOUT BEING HAIR-RAPED) 58
WENTZ, PETE 32, 34, 46, 94

FALL OUT BOY: BENJAMIN LOWY; POLICE: RYAN JACKSON; SCOTT WEILAND: AMANDA DE CADENET; WHITE STRIPES: ANDY WILLSHER.


JOURNEYS
JOURNEYS.COM
adidas
ORIGINALS
SNEAKEROLOGY 101
The adidas Superstar, also known as the *Shelltoe,* was born on the basketball courts in the 1970s. In the '80s, they were standard issue at every local concert—solidifying it's status as an independent. Today the classic Superstar with a modern edge is an underground staple. Check out these Original Superstars exclusively at Journeys.

Patton Oswalt

Werewolves and Lolipops

CD / DVD set
Available July 10, 2007

SUB POP subpop.com

Recorded in Austin, TX in Dec. 2006, Patton Oswalt's new CD comes packaged with a revolutionary image-and-sound delivery system called a "DVD," on which purchasers can see Patton performing much of the album live at the 40 Watt Club in Athens, GA. He also shoots guns, bowls, and eats things

Ultra. 10

The NEW 2xCD
A Collection Of The
BIGGEST DANCE HITS
From The Last 10 Years

The Ultimate Mix
featuring
Tiësto
Armin van Buuren
Benny Benassi
Armand Van Helden
David Morales
4 Strings

IN STORES JULY 10

ultrarecords.com | myspace.com/ultrarecords

ultra records BEST BUY

SCOTT WEILAND ★ SLASH ★ DUFF MCKAGAN ★ MATT SORUM ★ DAVE KUSHNER

VELVET REVOLVER

LIBERTAD

THE NEW ALBUM FEATURING **"SHE BUILDS QUICK MACHINES"**

AVAILABLE NOW

RCA BMG PRODUCED BY BRENDAN O'BRIEN ★ VELVETREVOLVER.COM ★ AVAILABLE AT BEST BUY

The RCA Records Label is a Unit of SONY BMG MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT • Tmk(s) ® Registered • ℠ Marca(s) Registrada(s) RCA Trademark Management S.A. • BMG logo is a trademark of Bertelsmann Music Group, Inc. • © 2007 RCA Records, a Unit of SONY BMG MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

Step Right Up!

BLENDER.COM

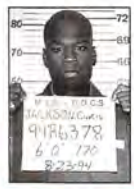
YOUR MUSIC BUDDY

An Oasis of Awesome in the Blackened Heart of Cyberspace

Videos! Features! Freaks!

Waiting for you at

www.blender.com



BLENDER

YOUR MUSIC BUDDY

Editor in Chief Craig Marks
Group Creative Director Andy Turnbull
Managing Editor Randi Hecht

EDITORIAL

Music Editor Rob Tannenbaum
Senior Editors Victoria De Silverio, Josh Eells, Jonah Weiner
Associate Editor Mark Yarm
Editor at Large Adam Higginbotham
Senior Critic Jon Dolan
Editorial Assistant Jon Coplon

ART

Associate Art Director Amelia Tubb
Senior Designer Billy Sorrentino

PHOTO

Photo Director Amy Hoppy
Deputy Photo Editor Chris Ehrmann
Associate Photo Editor Rory Walsh

PRODUCTION

Copy Chief Robin Aigner
Production Manager Dylan Boelte
Research Editor Darren Ratner
Copy Editors Jeff Perlah, Virginia Shannon
Research Associates Alex Basek, Robin Monheit

ONLINE

Senior Editor Mike Errico
Staff Writer Ryan Dombal

CONTRIBUTORS

Chris Buck, Kenneth Cappello, Nick Catucci, Andy Greenwald, Michael Joseph Gross, Will Hermes, Marc Hom, Hua Hsu, Matt Jones, Danielle Levitt, Ture Lillegraven, Dorian Lynskey, Sheryl Nields, Jason Nocito, Chris Norris, Perou, Simon Reynolds, Terry Richardson, Jeff Riedel, Jody Rosen, Martin Schoeller, Karen Schoemer, Peggy Sirota, RJ Smith, Alphonse Telymonde, Cliff Watts, Douglas Wolk

ADVERTISING

Publisher Lee Rosenbaum (212) 302-2626
Marketing Director William Gasperoni
Advertising Director Hugh Jamieson (212) 302-2626

Account Director Tami Prins (212) 302-2626
Account Director Brian Georgi (212) 302-2626
Music Director Mitch Herskowitz (212) 490-1715
Account Manager Rob Miller (212) 302-2626
Midwest Director Dave Nordahl (312) 440-3182
Detroit Director Kathy Vargo (248) 723-1302
Southern California Director Heather Gordon (310) 279-4462
Northwest Account Director Thecla Glueck (415) 749-0290
Texas Account Director Chris Knapp (972) 960-2889
Southeast Manager Jason Albaum (404) 531-6997
Indie Label Rep Ilko Nechev (212) 490-2079
Direct Response & Advertising Services Manager Anya Estrov
Direct Response & Advertising Services Manager Terry Dwyer
Promotional Art Director Tracy Taormina
Research Director Brady Jenkins
Events & Promotions Consultant James Nolan
Music Marketing Associate Jamie MacDonald
Marketing Intern Ben Barnes
Online National Advertising Director Steven Rosenblatt
Public Relations Four Corners Communications (212) 849-8250
Newsstand Distributors The Curtis Circulation Company

Audit Bureau of Circulations

A DENNIS PUBLICATION

Chairman Felix Dennis
President and CEO Stephen Colvin
Chief Operating & Financial Officer John M. Lagana
Group Creative Director Andy Turnbull
Director Robert G. Bartner
International Licensing Director Richard Bean (Richard_Bean@dennis.co.uk)
President of Dennis Digital Todd Anderman
Financial Controller Karen Reed
Director of Financial Reporting Kristine Johnston
Director of Manufacturing & Distribution Lou Terracciano
Production Manager Aimee Leinhardt
Consumer Marketing Director Charles W. Mast
Subscription Marketing Director Susan Tynan
Circulation Business Director James Buckley
Newsstand Manager Matthew Kexel
Human Resources Gretchen A. Grubel
IT & Facilities Director Randy Siegel
Director of Legal Affairs Harry Kanner
Director of Brand Development Barry Pincus

Copyright © 2007 Dennis Publishing, Inc. Blender® is a registered trademark owned by Felix Dennis. All rights reserved. August 2007 issue, Volume 6, Number 7. Blender is published 11 times per year by Dennis Publishing, Inc., 1040 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10018; Tel (212) 302-2626; Fax (212) 302-2635; Internet: blender.com. For subscription inquires, call: (386) 447-6319 or write to: Blender, PO Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL, 32164 or visit: blender.com/customerservice

50 CENT: MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES.

Here to play.

The new Coby® MP3 players have arrived. Music, videos and photos–it's playtime.

MP-C961
30GB HDD, MP3/WMA/OGG
Video, Photo, FM, Line-In & Voice Record

MP-C582
1GB Flash, MP3
Available in 5 colors

MP-C7085
1GB Flash, MP3/WMA
Video, FM & Voice Record

mp3™

©2007 Coby Electronics Corp.
All rights reserved.
Screen image is simulated.

emusic
Nº 1 Site for Independent Music

Available at: J&R MUSIC WORLD COMPUTER WORLD amazon.com f.y.e. for your entertainment

COBY®
Innovations for Every Lifestyle!™

YOU'VE GOT MAIL

BECAUSE SHARING IS CARING ...

The White Stripes: Not quite getting the whole "camping" thing.

Mute and Cute

You dedicated thousands of words to the White Stripes ("New Jack City," July), yet fewer than two dozen of them came from drummer Meg White (yes, I counted). I know she's notoriously shy, but couldn't you have coaxed her into saying something of interest? She does look friggin' amazing in your photos, though.

Steven Pierce, Layton, UT

The Biggest Balls of Them All

Screw those arty weirdos, the White Stripes! Give me the Jäger-swilling, groupie-shagging antics of Hinder any old day ("Collect Call From ... ," July). Their tour diary was fantastic—I only wish you'd run a photo proving that guitarist Joe "Blower" Garvey really is capable of making a beer can disappear into his "stretchy nutsac."

Jason Kellerman, Bloomington, IN

That's nothing. Where do you think David Copperfield tucked the Statue of Liberty?

Grease Is the Word

Ugh, could producer J.R. Rotem ("Pimpin' Ain't Easy," July) be any oilier? Your main photo of him—all slicked-back hair and cross-eyed—was totally disgusting. I hope the model he's mounting in the picture got paid a shitload of money. She deserves it.

Brianna Kenner, Wichita, KS

Teen Steamed

I am 19 years old and was appalled by Avril Lavigne's topless photo on your June cover. I understand that she's all grown up, but to be a role model for young girls and show off her tits like that is just not right. I have lost all respect for Ms. Lavigne.

Vanessa, Victoria, British Columbia

Bellyaching

What were you guys thinking when you placed the mailing label on my June issue? It was covering that hottie Avril's belly! I had to buy the newsstand copy so I could enjoy one of your best covers ever!

Michael Cupples, Phoenix

Glad to see our nefarious plot to corrupt the youth of America *and* boost circulation is working as planned! *Mwah-hah-hah!*

Joint Statement

What's Canadian crooner Michael Bublé's problem ("Who Does Michael Bublé Think He Is?" July)? He all but admits to taking drugs, but he won't say outright that he (apparently) smokes pot. Is he afraid of the DEA—or whatever Canada's undoubtedly wussy version of the DEA is? Man, say it loud, like I do: "I'm a stoner and I'm proud!"

LegalizeIt78, Madison, WI

We're totally with you, *man*. By the way, have you ever looked at your hands? We mean *really* looked at your hands? Whoa ...

Love.Angel.Music.Booboo.

In June's "Blender Bible" list of recommended downloads, you write that the Gwen Stefani song "Now That You Got It" isn't on her CD *The Sweet Escape*. But it is, in fact, on that disc. She also performs it in concert— >>

IF POP STARS WERE DOGS ...

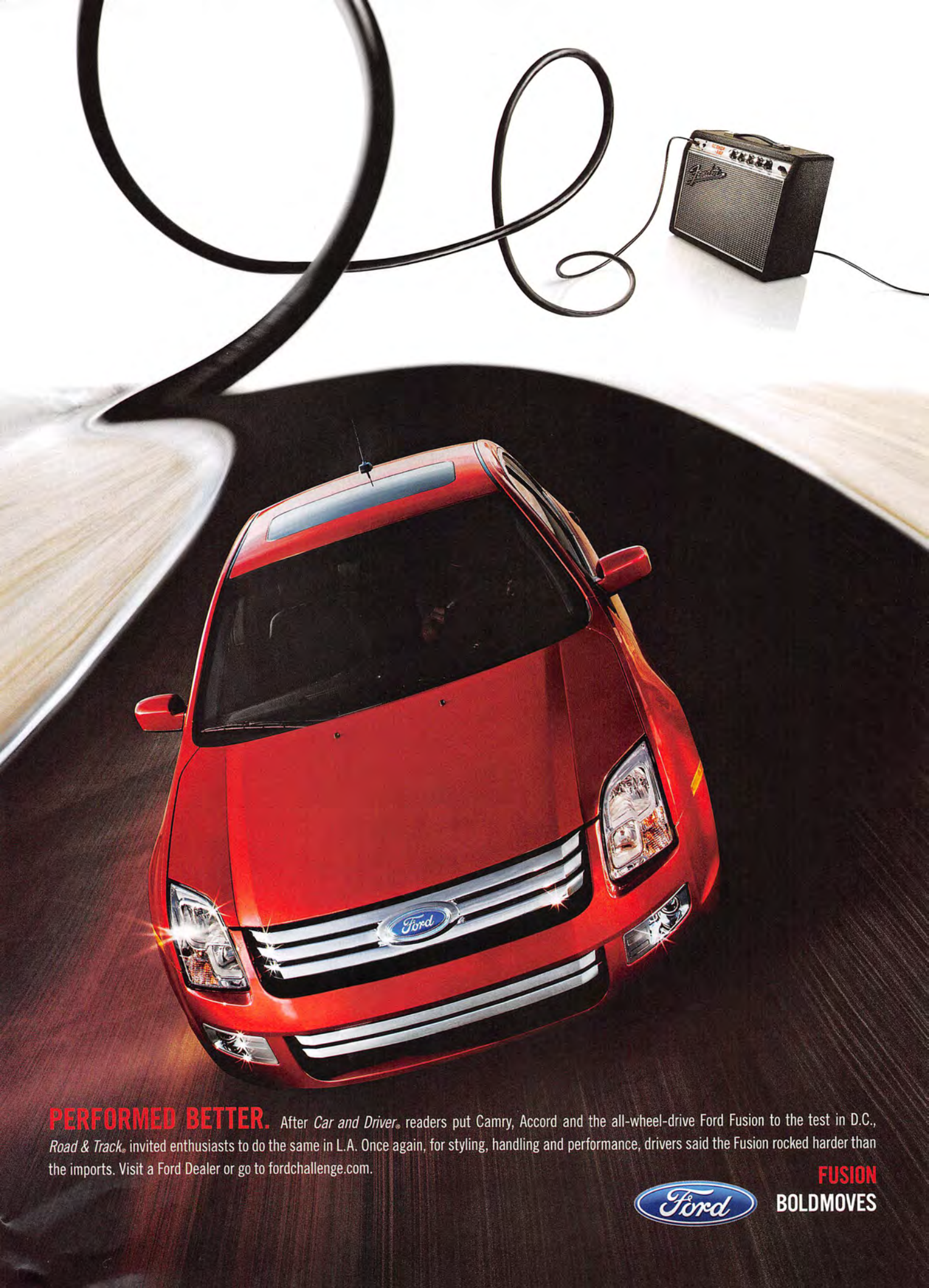
Send us a photo and tell us which music celebrity your pooch resembles. If we print it, you'll win the awesome Wafer cell phone by Samsung.

MARILYN MANSON
THE POP STAR

BUBBA BLUE
THE DOG

WIN ME!

WHITE STRIPES: DANIELLE LEVITT; MANSON: JON FURNISS/WIREIMAGE.


PERFORMED BETTER. After Car and Driver® readers put Camry, Accord and the all-wheel-drive Ford Fusion to the test in D.C., Road & Track® invited enthusiasts to do the same in L.A. Once again, for styling, handling and performance, drivers said the Fusion rocked harder than the imports. Visit a Ford Dealer or go to fordchallenge.com.
FUSION
Ford
BOLDMOVES

ASTRALWERKS 2007

INSIDE IN/INSIDE OUT THE KOOKS

The debut album from the band taking America by storm!
Featuring the hit singles **SHE MOVES IN HER OWN WAY** and **NAIVE**

WE ARE THE NIGHT THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS

The Chemical Brothers redefine a genre that they brought to the masses a decade ago. We Are The Night is the extraordinary new album that pushes their sonic mastercraft and songwriting to a new level

THOSE THE BROKES THE MAGIC NUMBERS

"Dazzling...Homespun guitar pop that recalls the casual elegance of early R.E.M." ★★★★½ SPIN
"Simply put, Those The Brokes is a step above their first album" ★★★★½ URB

VHS OR BETA

BRING ON THE COMETS

The anthemic new album in stores and online August 28
Features the first single Cant Believe a Single Word
www.vhsorbeta.com

ASTRALWERKS®

THE HOME OF UNCOMPROMISING MUSIC | WWW.ASTRALWERKS.COM

BEST BUY
Thousands of Possibilities
GET YOURS

MISSING SOMETHING?

COMPLETE YOUR FAVORITE ALBUMS NOW!

ONLY $7.99 (OR LESS IF YOU ALREADY OWN ONE OF THE TRACKS FROM THESE CLASSICS)

UMe

A UNIVERSAL MUSIC COMPANY

WWW.ILOVETHATSONG.COM

©2007 UNIVERSAL MUSIC ENTERPRISES, A DIVISION OF UMG RECORDINGS, INC.

ONLY ON iTunes

WWW.ITUNES.COM/MISSING

T.I. lectures on the superiority of boxers over briefs.

and, I might add, she rocks that song live.
Erika, Washington, D.C.

Sharply Worded Letter

What were you thinking, asking T.I. ("Dear Superstar," July) how to make a shiv? The reader who sent in that question probably fancies himself a comedian, but let me tell you—as an ex-con—there's nothing funny about shanks. Particularly if, like me, you've had one stabbed repeatedly into your midsection.

P.J., Chicago

In With the Nü

I'm sick of rap-rock bands like Linkin Park ("Second Life," June) having to defend their so-called crimes against music. Nü-metal is what it is: fun, Friday-afternoon, crack-a-brewski music—in other words, harmless. I applaud Linkin Park for expanding their sound and trying something different, but they shouldn't be ashamed of their roots.

Dan Duffy, El Segundo, CA

Jailhouse Rock

You left out a great show in June's "Ask Blender" answer about concerts that have taken place at prisons: the Jerry Garcia Band at the Oregon State Prison (5-5-82). Let me know if you want a copy.

Ron Deutsch, Reidsville, NC

Sure, we'll trade you two packs of cigs for it.

Hinder, Beware!

I just finished reading your story about Hinder in the July issue ("Collect Call From ... "), and I am totally creeped out. I'm a member of the women's track-and-field team at my college, just like those poor ladies the horndogs in Hinder were leering at from the safety of their tour bus. They'd better not try anything if they come to our campus, or else we'll javelin them where it counts. Except for the bassist—he's actually kind of cute.

Speed3000, Boston

Superfan

BRINGING OUT THE STALKER IN YOU SINCE 2001

CARLO DE SANTIS AND **KELLY CLARKSON**

BECK AND SHARI SUSICH

JAY HERTZ AND **CIARA**

DOLLY PARTON AND DARRYL STRONG

ERICA FIERSTEIN, **ICE CUBE** AND MEG WALKER

TOM MORELLO AND KRISHA MENDOZA

(📷)

SMILE!

Have a shot of yourself invading a pop star's personal space? Send it our way; if we print it, you'll get the Mophie Bevy, an iPod Shuffle case that's also a key chain and church key.

SEND ENTRIES TO:
superfan@blender.com,
or Superfan at Blender,
1040 Sixth Avenue, 15th Floor,
New York, NY 10018.

T.I.: BEN ROSE/WIREIMAGE.

L'ORÉAL® PARIS

YOUR STYLE, YOUR STUDIO™

©2007 L'Oréal USA, Inc.

new

StudioLine Indestructible

Style That's Rain Proof.
Sweat Proof. Life Proof.

Weather or Not
Indestructible: Extreme Spiking Glue
This sweat-resistant, water-resistant technology helps even the most extreme styles hold strong with zero residue. See for yourself. That's the real proof.

Get the latest styles and download a valuable coupon at lorealstudioline.com

L'ORÉAL PARIS

Chinese Currency

Great job on your list of "100 Days That Changed Music" (July)—I particularly enjoyed the entries on the history-making exploits of the Beatles and the Ramones. But the best part was your joke entry: "Guns N' Roses' *Chinese Democracy* released." I just hope we don't have to wait until 2032, as you predicted. Not because I want to hear the damn thing, mind you—but I have a $50 bet with my buddy that it will be in stores by 2010.

Destroyah122, Rio Rancho, NM

Fast-Food Nation

I picked up the July issue of *Blender* while on a crazy cross-country road trip with my college buddies. We were running low on cash, so Gym Class Heroes' advice on how to make cheap, filling meals from ingredients you can find at roadside gas stations ("Useful Tips," July) came in really handy. Drummer Matt McGinley's "ghetto gas-station Hawaiian pizza" recipe was so good, I plan to make it at home!

Jason W., Essex, VT

Feel My, My, My Serpentine

That picture you ran of Alice Cooper with the snake covering his private parts ("The Greatest Songs Ever," June) was by far the scariest, most shocking thing he has ever done. Onstage beheadings got nothing on that!

Philip Danchise, Spring Hill, FL

My Carbohydrate Romance

Thanks for running those high school yearbook photos of Gerard and Mikey Way ("Ungothly," July). I'm a high school senior who has a bit of a weight problem, and seeing that Gerard used to be a chunky teenager gave me hope that someday I'll be thin and cool, too.

Plozzenberry, Baltimore

Please remember us when you become the skinny-ass savior of the broken, the beaten and the damned.

Johnny Ramone: "The tin ceiling is just exquisite!"

Stern Reprimand

I can't believe that the most infamous shock jock, Howard Stern, didn't make your list of misbehaving DJs ("Morning Zoo Babylon," July). After all, this is a man whose main concern regarding the Columbine massacre was why the killers didn't try to have sex with any of the "really good-looking girls running with their hands over their heads." His comments eventually got him booted from the airwaves here in Denver.

D. Pollack, Denver

Boring Girls, Girls, Girls

Over the past six months you've run features on Ashley Tisdale (April), Hilary Duff (May) and now Mandy Moore ("Adult Entertainment," July). Congrats, *Blender*, you've hit the blandly attractive/boring-as-shit pop-star trifecta! Who owns you, Disney?

Greg English, Cranston, RI

If that's how you feel, we advise you ignore this month's feature on those blandly attractive Disney-lovin' pop sensations Against Me!

Cleveland Rots!

When you asked Little Steven, "What's the worst place you've ever been?" ("Who Does Little Steven Think He Is?" June), one of his answers was, "Cleveland, before they fixed it up." Can he tell me when exactly "they" fixed it up? As a resident of Cleveland, I can tell you that it's still a disaster.

Spacewrgler, Cleveland

Hey, any city that has a steamer named after it can't be all bad.

BLENDER'S BURNING QUESTION

What should Paris do now that she is out of jail?

SURVEY SAYS

READER WISDOM

"BITCH NEEDS A BUZZ CUT AND SOME DISCIPLINE."

JOSHUA CLARK, PORTLAND, OR

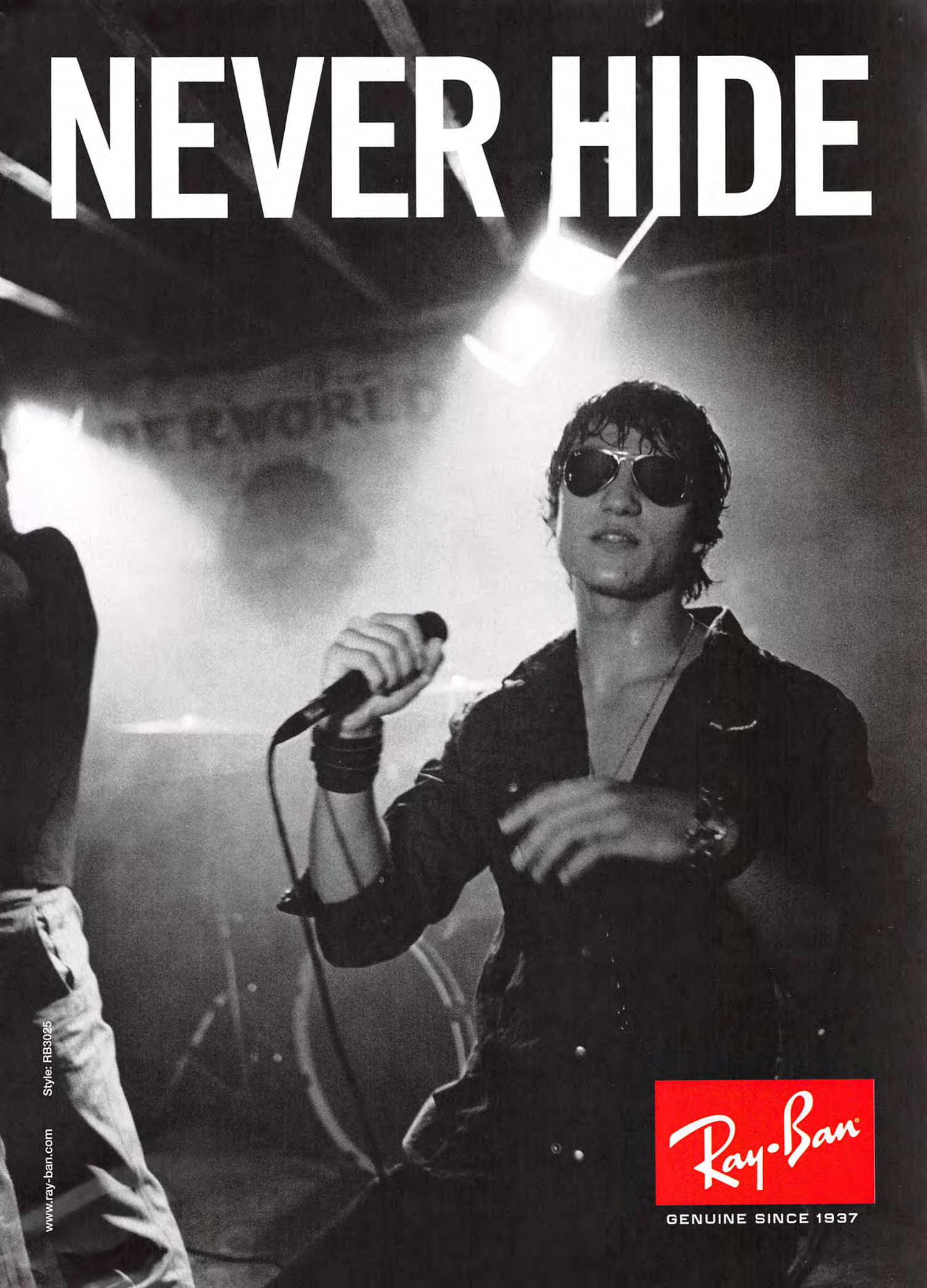
Log on to Blender.com for the next Burning Question. One deserving reader will have his/her thought-provoking comment published in the magazine and win a Coby MPC-7055 Mp3 player.

LISTEN UP

Blender readers: We want to hear from you! So write in and tell us how you really feel.

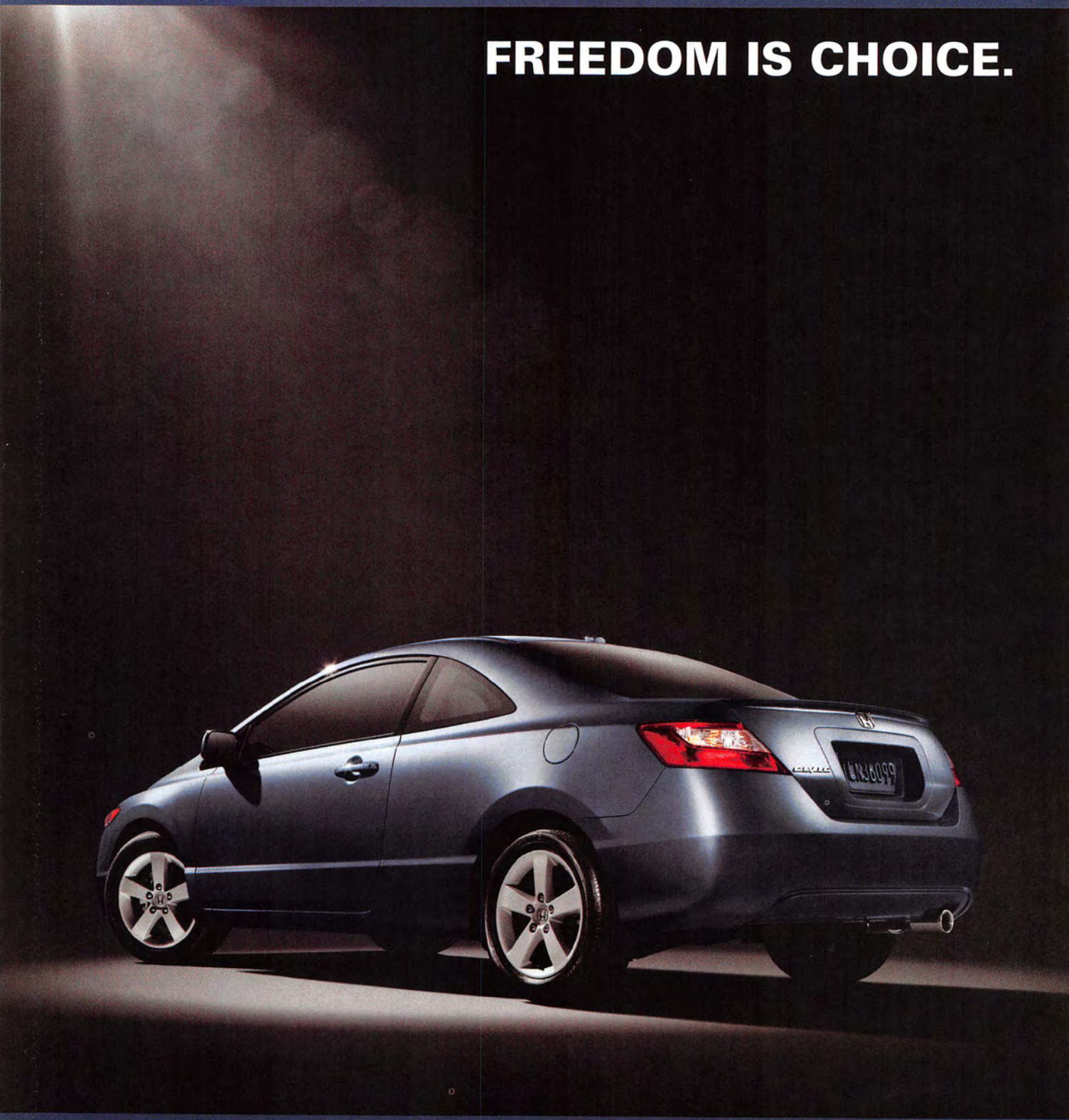
Send all correspondence to:
your2cents@blender.com, or Blender, 1040 Sixth Avenue, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

RAMONE: ARENAPAL/TOPHAM/THE IMAGE WORKS; MOORE: GARY GERSHOFF/WIREIMAGE; TISDALE: JON KOPALOFF/FILMMAGIC; DUFF: JESSE GRANT/WIREIMAGE; HILTON: MAURY PHILLIPS/WIREIMAGE; HELMET: NICHOLAS EVELEIGH/GETTY IMAGES.


NEVER HIDE
Ray-Ban
GENUINE SINCE 1937
www.ray-ban.com
Style: RB3025

CIVIC

FREEDOM IS CHOICE.



The five-star frontal crash safety-rated* Civic Coupe from Honda. Reverse your thinking.

honda.com 1-800-33-Honda

EX model shown with available Honda Satellite-Linked Navigation System.™ *National Highway Traffic Safety Administration frontal crash test. ©2006 American Honda Motor Co., Inc.

Jack White recruits for his Seven Generation Army.

The Bloods' diversification efforts paid off.

THUMPY OLD MEN

THE WHITE STRIPES give a free concert at a fancy retirement home in London

IN THE 18TH CENTURY, Britain's Royal Hospital Chelsea played host to a concert by Mozart; earlier this summer, another musical genius performed at the home for elderly military veterans: Jack White.

In advance of the White Stripes' sixth album, *Icky Thump*, which owes its title to Yorkshire slang, the Detroit duo played an acoustic afternoon set to 20 of the hospital's residents, kicking off a run of concert dates. "Thanks for letting us into your home," White told the 65-and-up audience, who sported their traditional—not to mention Jack-pleasing—color scheme of red (soldiers' tunics), black (tricorn hats) and white (hair).

And the pensioners didn't let a lack of familiarity with the band dampen their enthusiasm. "Fantastic!" retiree Paddy Fox told reporters. "Normally, we only get the odd carol service in here." *Noel Boddie*

ANDY WILLSHER (2).

LOLCATS

Pussycat Doll **NICOLE SCHERZINGER** gets a heads-up

1

Just 20 minutes after a tiger-shark sighting, the leader of the Pussycat Dolls frolicked in the warm Hawaiian water with her boyfriend, Talan Torriero (of *Laguna Beach*).

2

Clearly not intimidated by the aquatic predator, known locally as "the wastebasket of the sea" and whose length averages 11 feet, the pair continue to horseplay.

3

The brave Hawaii native and her reality-show beau thumb their noses at the tiger shark and celebrate their unbitten limbs by hoisting each other in the air.

NEWS ROUNDUP

BON JOVI guitarist Richie Sambora, 48, left an undisclosed treatment facility in Los Angeles one week after being admitted. The rocker sought rehab following a split with celebrity girlfriend Denise Richards.

ANDRÉ 3000, Matthew Friedberger of the **FIERY FURNACES** and **EDDIE VEDDER** are among the candidates for PETA's sexiest male vegetarian. Competing in the female category are **FIONA APPLE**, **ERYKAH BADU** and **PINK**. Natalie Portman and Good Charlotte's Benji Madden won the titles last year.

MEL C. (a.k.a. Sporty Spice) has finally agreed to participate in a Spice Girls reunion. "If the other four girls want to do it, I don't want to be the one to hold things up," she said. Details have yet to be determined.

WORD!

"I'M EMBARRASSED TO BE ME."

MARILYN MANSON, ON MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE'S "SAD, PITIFUL, SHALLOW" IMITATION OF HIM

Win Butler just remembered he forgot to TiVo *Sunset Tan*.

PLAYERS BALL

Did **ARCADE FIRE** singer Win Butler steal a "dude's" basketball?

CONTROVERSY ROCKED THE blogosphere in early June when a man identified only as Chris H. charged that Arcade Fire frontman Win Butler stole his basketball after a spat at UC Berkeley. Chris H. documented his unfriendly encounter with Butler on a blog he named Arcade Fire Stole My Basketball: He accused Butler of swiping his ball after he and the lanky singer got into an argument over court rights.

A user purporting to be Arcade Fire multi-instrumentalist Will Butler rushed to brother Win's defense in the blog's comments section. "I was upstairs with Win when he was escorted out," he wrote. "Win Butler didn't steal your fucking ball." The commenter started a counter-blog called Arcade Fire Didn't Steal Dude's Basketball.

The night of the fight, during an Arcade Fire show at the Greek Theatre, Butler recounted the altercation, with no mention of the alleged theft: "Since we can't stop the war, let's boycott Berkeley athletic facilities." *Mark Yarm*

Timbaland practices his beats.

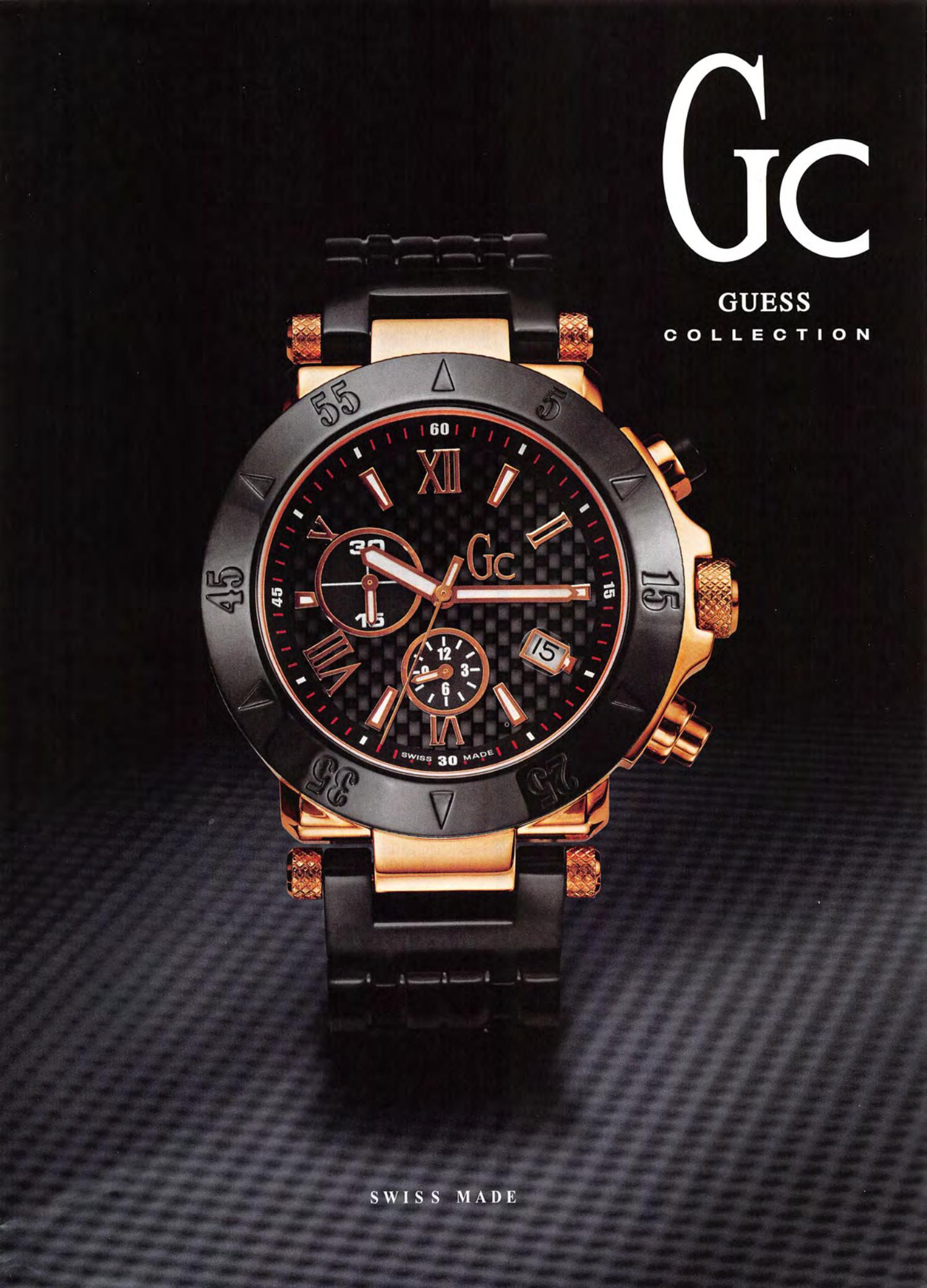
BEAT MASTER

TIMBALAND scuffles with a jealous Croat man

Police in Cologne, Germany, detained "SexyBack" producer Timbaland after he and members of his posse allegedly attacked a man in a hotel bar. According to local newspapers, a Croatian identified as Robert F. was upset that the superproducer was talking to his girlfriend. Reports say tension escalated and a brawl ensued after the bar patron hurled a racial slur at Timbaland. Robert F. left in an ambulance with bruises and injuries to his rib cage, while Timbaland was held for questioning. *Noel Boddie*

SCHERZINGER, FROM TOP: BENNETT RAGLIN/WIREIMAGE; SPLASH NEWS (3); BUTLER: KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES; BASKETBALL: CREATAS/SUPERSTOCK; TIMBALAND: WENN; INSET: JOHNNY NUNEZ/WIREIMAGE; MANSON: BARRY KING/WIREIMAGE.

 "Ball and chain is the feeling that I am feeling tonight/When love's a ball and chain, it don't matter who's wrong or right."


Gc
GUESS
COLLECTION
SWISS MADE

Criss, really tired of all the pussy jokes.

> DO YOU ROCK?

PETER CRISS

Does the legendary Kiss drummer and solo artist indeed ... ROCK?

Ever trashed a hotel room?
One time in Los Angeles I bought some Black and Decker tools so I could drill a hole in the wall and visit Ace in the next room.

Best rumor about yourself?
That I was raised by wolves.

Brush with the law?
I tried to bring a gun my grandfather gave me on a plane. I spread the pieces of it throughout my luggage. I never did get it back.

Worst rock & roll injury?
Once when I was singing "Beth," someone whacked me in the face with a roll of toilet paper soaked in piss.

Thing you most regret?
Probably the last tour [in 2003], when we went on without Ace—if it ain't the four, it ain't Kiss.

Ever been declared legally dead?
In 1979, I was thrown through the window of my Porsche 928 and pronounced dead. I saw the white light. The last thing I remember was putting an Eagles tape on.

Ever driven a car into a pool?
No, but Ace and I drove a car down a golf course once.

What's the worst place you've ever been sick?
Once in Japan we were doing a commercial for pies. I had a fever of 104 and had to take a bite of the pie every take. I thought I was gonna die. *Dave Hill*

VERDICT

Rising from the dead? Hit by a urine-soaked projectile? Criss has still got it!

OUT NOW *ONE FOR ALL* SILVERCAT

NEWS ROUNDUP

KANYE WEST celebrated his 30th birthday at New York's Louis Vuitton store in June. Celebrity well-wishers included Diddy, Pharrell, Rihanna, Jay-Z, Jermaine Dupri, Pete Wentz, Ashlee Simpson and Mariah Carey. Internet posts say approximately $30,000 worth of merchandise went missing that night.

A total of 1,683 guitarists set a world record in Kansas City, Kansas, by performing "Smoke on the Water," by **DEEP PURPLE**. Players came from as far as Germany to break the previous mark of 1,323, set in Vancouver in 1994.

An aspiring MC started a beef with **EMINEM** after stealing the rapper's ex-wife's cell phone at an Ontario bingo hall. Kyle Spratt, 18, called and begged Eminem to listen to his demo; when he refused, Spratt recorded a diss track called "Slim Sellout" and posted it on his MySpace page.

WORD!

"LOCK THE DOOR, DON'T GO OUT WITH YOUR STUPID FRIENDS, HAVE SOME HOME-COOKED FOOD."
SIMON COWELL, ON BRITNEY SPEARS

Brock, pissed that his cameo as Captain Jack Sparrow Jr. got cut.

ARRRRRR!

MODEST MOUSE singer transforms into a pirate after bottle attack

MODEST MOUSE FRONTMAN Isaac Brock underwent surgery on his left eye in early June after a hooligan hit him in the face with a bottle in Nottingham, England, according to representatives for the band. The attack occurred in late May, when Brock confronted some street thugs who were bothering a friend of his. Following the incident, the chivalrous singer—who also suffered a broken nose and a cut on his face as a result of the blow—sported an eye patch, a look that fit nicely with the nautical theme of Modest Mouse's latest album, *We Were Dead Before the Ship Even Sank*.

In the wake of Brock's surgery, the band was forced to cancel or postpone a week's worth of European gigs. This isn't the first time Brock has been injured this year. During a Sioux Falls, South Dakota, show in March, the singer cut his chest with a knife, apparently on purpose. *Mark Yarm*

Stapp: "I should have gone plastic."

BOTTLED UP

SCOTT STAPP accused of throwing Orangina bottle at wife's head

Former Creed frontman Scott Stapp was arrested in May on an aggravated-assault charge after allegedly throwing a bottle of Orangina at his wife. Jaclyn Nesheiwat told police the rocker became "very angry" after she asked him if he was drunk and high at 8 A.M. in their Florida home. Stapp's lawyer argued a glass bottle is not a deadly weapon and the charge was reduced to a misdemeanor. Stapp apologized to the officers for "taking them away from the serious and dangerous job of protecting our community." *Dan Reilly*

CRISS: LYNN GOLDSMITH/CORBIS; BROCK: SARAH WORNE; STAPP AND NESHEIWAT: DIMITRIOS KAMBOURIS/WIREIMAGE; ORANGINA: ANNEBICQUE BERNARD/CORBIS SYGMA; COWELL: ALBERT L. ORTEGA/WIREIMAGE.

UNIONBAY®
unionbay.com

"Out, out, damn curl!"

COLLECT CALL FROM ...

Fall Out Boy

Each month, one lucky rock star phones *Blender* HQ for seven straight days, just to, you know, share. Now on the line: Fall Out Boy's bassist/heartthrob **PETE WENTZ**

Interviews by JOSH EELLS *Photographs by* BENJAMIN LOWY

DAY 1 MAY 17, 2:02 P.M.

One week into the band's tour with the Academy Is ..., (+44), Cobra Starship and Paul Wall, Wentz calls from Milwaukee, sounding like he just woke up.

"Sorry, dude, but I *just* woke up. Can I call you back in, like, an hour?"

One hour and 41 minutes later, the phone rings again.

"Sorry about that. For some reason I got up this morning at 8 A.M. Then at 9, I was like, 'Nope, definitely not up,' and went back to bed.

"Minneapolis yesterday was cool. We played where the T-Wolves play, and we ate Pizza Lucé—that's the jam. We would have gone to the Mall of America, but malls are insane for us. I can't go within 500 feet of a Hot Topic—a sensor goes off inside the store.

"People keep asking why we postponed our tour. I read articles like, 'They did it so this dude could get off drugs,' or, 'So this dude could date that girl.' The truth is we just needed a rest. Nobody went to rehab. And it wasn't my fault."

DAY 2 MAY 18, 2:12 P.M.

Wentz phones from an amphitheater just outside St. Louis.

"Last night we played Milwaukee, which is only about an hour from our hometown [Chicago]. Playing your hometown is bad—everybody comes out of the woodwork—but playing an hour away is even worse, because everyone who comes feels entitled to an hour-long conversation. It's like, 'What's up, Cousin Larry?'

"But my parents came, which was nice. They're superfans: They have a little pushpin map, and any show within an eight-hour drive, they'll go. Last night they met my girlfriend [Ashlee Simpson] for the first time. I was nervous, but my mom had two vodka tonics, so everyone got along fine.

"Afterward we watched the Bulls lose in the playoffs. I'm pretty much half-gay, so I don't follow our sports teams until they start winning, but it was still a bummer. I actually just got a new bass with the Air Jordan logo on it. We're waiting for the cease and desist."

DAY 3 MAY 19, 3:47 P.M.

Wentz rings us from his room at the Sheraton in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.

"What a great Saturday. We're here in scenic Cuyahoga Falls, just outside Cleveland. I'm actually looking at the falls right now. They look a little murky.

"Today is one of our only real off-days. Our next 'day off' we have to fly to Arkansas to play the Wal-Mart shareholders meeting. We're pretty much corporate whores. But since about a third of our CDs are sold through Wal-Mart, we try to keep them happy. Apparently Ma and Pa Walton don't really like it when I do interviews about kissing boys.

"We had a big moment yesterday: Our friend Dirty and I stole the first golf cart of the tour. We got chased by venue security for, like, 10 minutes before a guy with a supercharged cart caught up to us. I jumped out and ran off; Dirty told me they kept asking about 'that chick you were with.' For once, wearing girls' jeans paid off."

DAY 4 MAY 20, 3:29 P.M.

Still in Cuyahoga Falls, Wentz checks in to report on his day off while waiting for sound check.

"We had an interesting $40 cab ride to Chili's last night. The cabbie was like, 'So, you guys play alternative music? Have you ever thought about bringing Christ into it?' We told him the Jewish guy in our band probably wouldn't be too stoked about that.

"We're really excited to be part of this Honda Civic Tour. It's all about helping the environment: Nobody's flying, and there's recycling at all the venues. They even let us design our own Honda hybrid. We'll say yes to anything.

"When you're doing a tour this size, you have to get a corporation to bear the brunt of the cost. People call it selling out, but that's how we can keep our ticket prices low. The Rolling Stones can charge $200 because their fans are 45 years old. It's a little harder when your fans are scraping together allowance money."

Singer Patrick Stump tunes up.

Wentz, Ashlee Simpson and a fan enjoy a cutthroat game of Taboo.

Wentz takes it like a man. A very wussy man.

Feeling blue in Cincinnati.

Clockwise from top right: Lovebirds Wentz and Simpson; Stump blows; driving the Pittsburgh girls crazy.

DAY 5 MAY 21, 5:53 P.M.

Wentz calls from Cincinnati three hours late, after being mobbed by fans at a local mall.

"Dude, the mall was madness. We always think it'll be different, but it never is. I mean, I just wanted to go to Forever 21!

"Our fans are crazy that way. Like, last night I got home from the bar, and there was a whole Little League team waiting outside my room. I don't know how they find me. Right now I'm staying under the name Nick Papagiorgio, from National Lampoon's *Vegas Vacation*. I used to stay under Weezy F. Baby, Lil Wayne's nickname, but then I thought, What if somebody shows up and wants to shoot this dude?

"Hey, have you seen *Spider-Man 3*? I haven't, but everybody's been calling me like, 'Dude, they totally ripped off your look.' Apparently Spider-Man is emo now. Maybe I should send *them* a cease and desist."

DAY 6 MAY 22, 3:22 P.M.

Fresh off a game of Wii Tennis, *Wentz calls from an amphitheater near Pittsburgh.*

"Did you know in Pittsburgh they say 'y'ins' instead of 'you guys'? Weird!

"Middle America is crazy; but it's been rad spending time with Ashlee away from the paparazzi. We just ride bikes and go to Chick-fil-A. She's recording right now, so she can't come out that often, but it's nice to be with someone who's creative and has her own thing going on, so you don't feel like you're babysitting. Her dad's cool, too—as cool as you can be with somebody who's had 3 million people see him naked online. It's the first healthy relationship I've been in in a long time. I'm trying not to blow it."

"I'M PRETTY MUCH HALF-GAY." PETE WENTZ

DAY 7 MAY 24, 4:10 P.M.

The next day, in Virginia, Wentz cancels because he's not feeling well. Instead, he phones the following afternoon from the Canadian border, where the band just cleared customs on their way to Montreal.

"Sorry about yesterday. Usually I take an Ambien to go to sleep, but one of our techs gave me something else—I think it's called Seroquel? Dude, it knocked me out. I slept for 17 hours—he pretty much roofied me.

"Last night was fun. We played Taboo—Ash was technically on my team, but she pretty much just shouts for everyone. Then our tattoo guy came to fix my shit a little. I have a bunch of half-finished tattoos—it's partly my short attention span and partly because I have the pain tolerance of a 7-year-old. He fixed two—one on my hand, and another ... uh, somewhere else. An area people may have seen on the Internet.

"I guess that's it. I hope this was fun, even though we weren't, like, shooting Jack Daniel's into our veins. I just like playing music. If I wanted to do drugs and bang chicks, I would have just stayed in my hometown."

INSETS: SIMPSON: JAMIE MCCARTHY/WIREIMAGE; WENTZ: DENISE TRUSCELLO/WIREIMAGE.

©church & dwight virginia co. inc 2007.
evolve.
be a man. use a condom every time. nobody likes a pig.
TROJAN®
BRAND CONDOMS
trojanevolve.com

ALL NEW 2007 JEEP® PATRIOT. CHOOSE YOUR ADVENTURE.

Paved roads or beaten paths, Jeep® Patriot takes you where the action is. With a powerful 2.4L 172
like ESP, ABS, Electronic Roll Mitigation, and available Trail Rated® capability, adventure is just a drive

†4x2 MSRP. 4x4 Limited as shown, $23,910. MSRPs exclude tax. *2007 EPA est. mpg of 26 city/30 highway for 5-speed manual-equipped 4x2 models. Jeep and Trail Rated

horsepower engine that gets up to 30 mpg,* standard safety and security features away. Starting at only $15,110.† **Choose your adventure at PatriotAdventure.com**

Jeep

are registered trademarks of DaimlerChrysler Company LLC. CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE is a registered trademark of Chooseco, LLC.

The Cribs

A trio of brothers from Yorkshire, England, enlist pals from Franz Ferdinand and Sonic Youth on their breakthrough U.S. debut

BY NICK DUERDEN ✱ PHOTOGRAPH BY JANETTE BECKMAN

All About Us!

FLEEING THE JARMAN FAMILY NEST "We used to live together, me and Ryan and Ross, back at home with the folks. But it nearly drove us mad." (Gary)

RECOMMENDED READING "*The Rotters' Club*, by Jonathan Coe." (Ross)

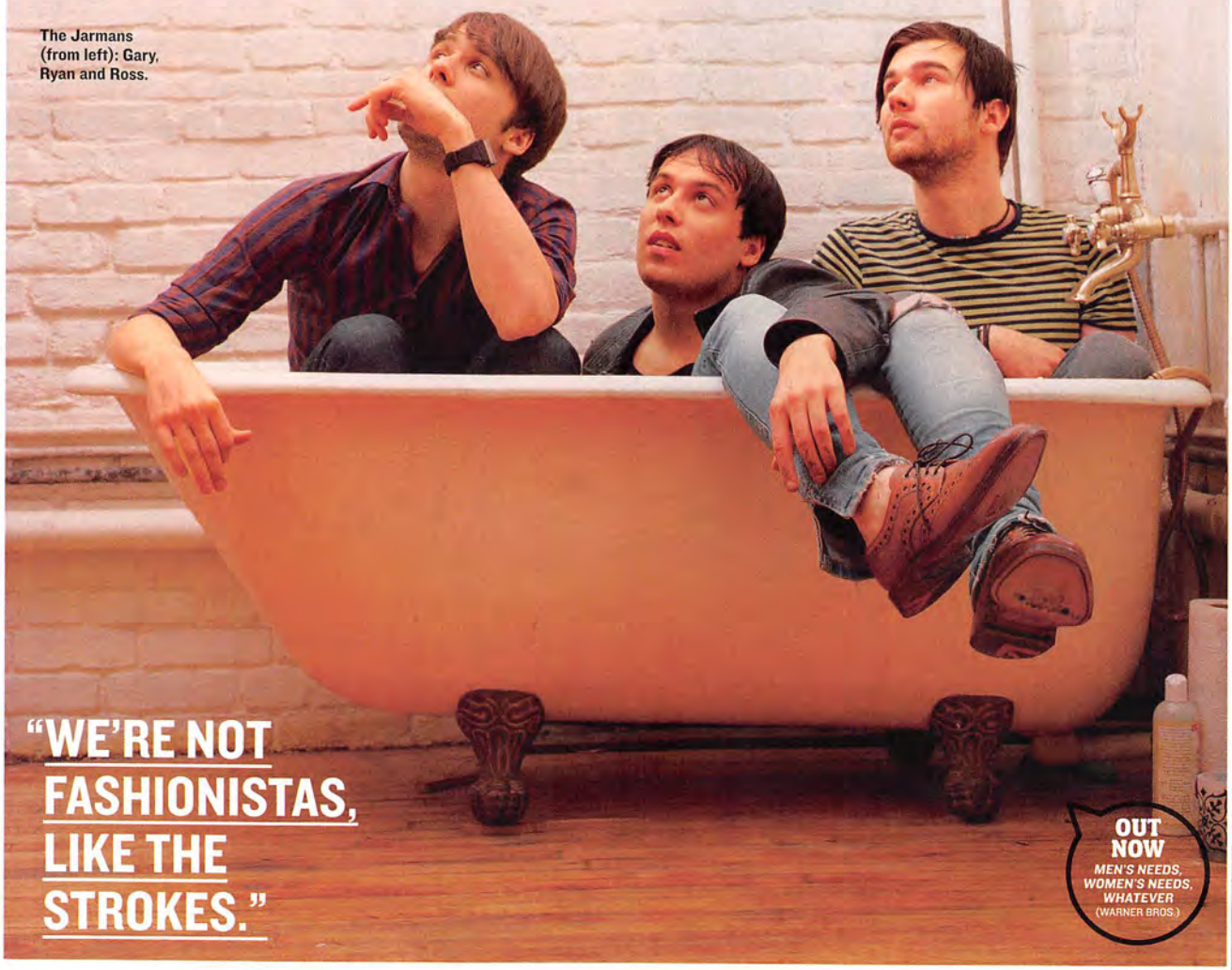
TYPICAL NIGHT OF DEBAUCHERY INCLUDES "A few pitchers, some Vicodin and a game of darts." (Gary)

AVAILING HIMSELF OF a ham sandwich and a bottle of water, the Cribs' frontman, Gary Jarman, lowers his skinny frame into a sunken sofa in the dressing room of London music venue Astoria. He smiles with a remoteness that soon comes to define him. "I've always been like this," the 26-year-old admits. "At school, I learned to read music and play violin. I liked understanding something that kept me separate, distinct."

Formed by Gary six years ago with his twin, Ryan, on guitar and younger brother Ross, 22, on drums, the Yorkshire trio makes spiky, punkish melodies reminiscent of Pavement at their most deliciously wayward. The Cribs' first two albums—2004's self-titled effort and the following year's *The New Fellas*—won them celebrity fans (Kaiser Chiefs, Beck), while their latest, *Men's Needs, Women's Needs, Whatever*, the band's official U.S. debut, is produced by Franz Ferdinand's Alex Kapranos and features Sonic Youth's Lee Ranaldo on the apocalyptic spoken-word track "Be Safe." "But we're not fashionistas, like the Strokes," the singer pouts. "I like their music, but I wouldn't want to be in a band dominated by the hip factor. That would ... trouble me."

During last year's heavy touring, Gary became so troubled that he temporarily lost control: "I was somewhat hedonistic," says the man who would "indulge" himself pre-gig, then throw himself about with such wild abandon he regularly ended up bleeding profusely. "You can only poison yourself for so long before saying, 'Enough is enough.'"

And so, while collective momentum is high following an acclaimed appearance at Coachella, his face is all a frown. "It's great people are starting to take notice of us," he concedes. "But I do worry. I mean, how will I cope with the attention?" [BLENDER]



The Jarmans (from left): Gary, Ryan and Ross.

"WE'RE NOT FASHIONISTAS, LIKE THE STROKES."

OUT NOW
MEN'S NEEDS, WOMEN'S NEEDS, WHATEVER
(WARNER BROS.)

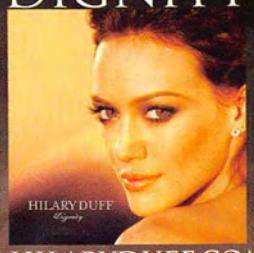
 "Get it wet/Try to marinate your mind/What's up, am I deserving enough just 'cause we up in the club."

HILARY DUFF

DIGNITY TOUR

BUY AT LIVENATION.com

NEW CD
DIGNITY



IN STORES NOW

HILARYDUFF.COM

08/06/07 EVERETT, WA
08/07/07 PORTLAND, OR
08/11/07 CONCORD, CA
08/12/07 BAKERSFIELD, CA
08/14/07 SAN DIEGO, CA
08/15/07 UNIVERSAL CITY, CA
08/18/07 LAS VEGAS, NV
08/19/07 PHOENIX, AZ
08/21/07 DENVER, CO
08/23/07 MINNEAPOLIS, MN
08/24/07 CHICAGO, IL
08/25/07 LOUISVILLE, KY
08/27/07 NEW YORK, NY
08/29/07 SYRACUSE, NY
08/31/07 ALLENTOWN, PA
09/01/07 DARIEN CENTER, NY

IN SUPPORT OF USA HARVEST FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY

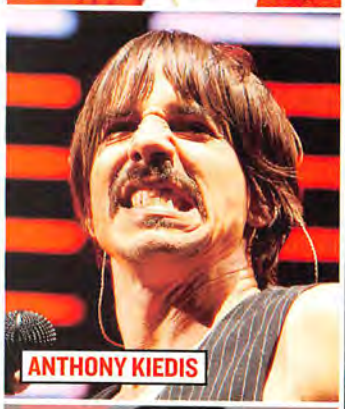
> POP-STAR MUST-HAVE

'STACHES

Nose neighbors give singers some quick 'n' easy depth and character

ROBIN THICKE

CISCO ADLER



ANTHONY KIEDIS

BRANDON FLOWERS

NEWS ROUNDUP

An obesity expert says she has received death threats after commenting that *American Idol* winner **JORDIN SPARKS** is unhealthy and overweight. "When I look at Jordin, I see diabetes, I see heart disease, I see high cholesterol," MeMe Roth said in a televised interview.

WILCO has angered fans by licensing their music for use in Volkswagen commercials. The band doesn't seem bothered by the sellout talk. "We feel OK about VWs," read a statement on their Web site. "Several of us even drive them."

THE GAME is facing felony charges for possessing a firearm in a Los Angeles school zone. Police said the rapper pulled a gun from his red Cadillac Escalade after punching a player on an opposing team during a pickup basketball game. If convicted, he faces five years in prison.

WORD!

"I PLAN ON TAKING MORE OF AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE DECISIONS I MAKE."
PARIS HILTON, ON THE FUTURE

Insured against robots who eat old people's medicine for fuel.

I ♥ MY 90S

THE ZIMMERS, the oldest band in the world, has scored their first, and possibly last, hit single

THE ZIMMERS, A British act composed of the elderly who came together to record a version of the Who's "My Generation," entered the U.K. charts at No. 26 in early June. The 40-strong band was created for a BBC TV documentary, *Power to the People*, a program intended to represent the feelings of isolation and imprisonment often suffered by the aged. "This is about old people sticking it back to the society that has cast them aside," says filmmaker Tim Samuels, who, along with the show's producers, recruited members from rest homes and bingo halls.

The group, whose combined age is around 3,000, recorded the song at Abbey Road Studios with producer Mike Hedges, who has worked with U2 and Dido. A video of their performance can be found on YouTube. "I can't believe this is happening," says frontman Alf Carretta, 90, who was 48 when the Who song came out. "I feel like the whole experience has brought me back to life. I was stuck in a rut, and now I feel alive again." The Zimmers, who take their name from a British brand of walker, are planning to record more songs, possibly Iggy Pop's "Lust for Life" and Simple Minds' "Alive and Kicking," as well as set out on a Stateside tour. *Nick Duerden*

Jagger: "I'm a sole man! Geddit?"

BEES OF BURDEN

MICK JAGGER enlisted stinging insects to enlarge his schlong

Not content with having puffy lips, Mick Jagger allegedly underwent an Amazonian ritual that uses bees to enhance the size of the penis, while in Peru in 1981. "It involved putting bamboo over the male member and filling it with stinger bees so it attained the size of the bamboo," says filmmaker Julien Temple, who helmed the Rolling Stones' "Undercover of the Night" video. According to Janice Dickinson, however, the wacky treatment didn't work. The model has called his package "very small." *Dan Reilly*

THICKE: MAURY PHILLIPS/WIREIMAGE; ADLER: TODD WILLIAMSON/WIREIMAGE; KIEDIS: MICHAEL TRAN/FILMMAGIC; FLOWERS: SUZAN/EMPICS/RETNA; ZIMMERS: DANNY CLIFFORD/HOTTWIRE.NET (2); JAGGER: BRIAN SNYDER/CORBIS; BEE: PIXTAL/SUPERSTOCK; HILTON: STEVE GRANITZ/WIREIMAGE.

 "Help the aged/One time they were just like you/Drinking, smoking cigs and sniffing glue."

©2007R.J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO CO.

SMOOTHER.
WIDER. DIFFERENT.

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Cigarette Smoke Contains Carbon Monoxide.

XL BLUE: 14 mg. "tar", 1.0 mg. nicotine, XL GREEN: 17 mg. "tar", 1.2 mg. nicotine, av. per cigarette by FTC method. Actual amount may vary depending on how you smoke. For T&N info, visit www.rjrttarnic.com.

HOW TO ...

Start a Comic-Book Collection

Countrified rocker and Batman devotee **RYAN ADAMS** tells you how to unleash your inner fanboy

BY MARK YARM
PHOTOGRAPH BY PHILLIP TOLEDANO

1 Get Inspired

"Browse a store and see what artist or stories inspire you or what heroes appeal to you. My biggest connection is with Batman: He's a dark dude; he has women trouble; he may or may not have been a drunk. I can identify with those things."

2 Get a Subscription

"See what's working for you, then get a subscription. Decide whether you're going to get copies to read or you're going to be collecting to finish a series. Only very popular series get to the point where back issues are extraordinarily expensive."

3 Get to a Sale

"Most flea markets, yard sales and antiques dealers usually have a stack of comics that have been thumbed through only once or twice. You never know, you might find a jewel like *Batman* No. 68, and go, 'Oh my God, I'm going to buy a mansion!'"

4 Get Protection

"Buy plastic sleeves to protect the books from dust, spills and tearing, and cardboard backs to protect their spines. And get storage boxes. Once you have enough comics to fill a box, you know you're in—the infestation has taken hold."

OUT NOW
EASY TIGER
(LOST HIGHWAY)

GUARD YOUR YARDS.
RICE RETURNS.
EPISODE 1
FOOTBALL RESURRECTED
A SERIES CELEBRATING THE RETURN OF THE GAME. WATCH IT AT:
FOOTBALLRESURRECTED.COM
2K SPORTS
ALL-PRO FOOTBALL 2K8
THIS SUMMER THE LEGEND RETURNS.
EVERYONE 10+
Mild Language
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org
XBOX 360 LIVE
PLAYSTATION 3
2K SPORTS
©2007 Take-Two Interactive Software and its subsidiaries. All rights reserved. All-Pro Football 2K8 , 2K Sports, the 2K Sports logo, Take-Two Interactive Software are all trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc. All other marks and trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies. "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION", and "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Online access requires broadband Internet service and a wireless access point or LAN. Certain limitations apply to Wi-Fi connectivity. User is responsible for Internet service fees. This game is not licensed or endorsed by any professional league.

Winehouse discovers the hornet's nest inside her hair.

> When Will Your Favorite Pop Star Croak?

#40 AMY WINEHOUSE

Birth date	SEPTEMBER 14, 1983
Current age	23
Death calculator starts at age	79

CATEGORY	YEARS ADDED/SUBTRACTED
British female life expectancy is 81 (+2); parents split when Amy was 10 (-2)	+0
Marriage: Wed boyfriend Blake Fielder-Civil (+5), who is facing assault charges in England (-2)	+3
Bad student: Expelled at age 16	-2
Identity issues: "I'm not a girl. I'm a man's man and that doesn't mean I'm a dyke."	-2
Cigarettes: Ex-heavy smoker (-4), hangs with smokers (-2)	-6
Jazz cigarettes: Once had a two-ounce-a-week habit ("It made me eat crap food")	-2
Ill-tempered: Tabloids say she has slugged her boyfriend and a fan; cancels gigs often	-1
Hepatitis risk: Has at least 12 tattoos, including her husband's name on her breast	-2
Booze cruiser: Self-described "violent drunk"; nicknamed Amy Wino	-5
Positivity: Despite media emphasis on her lifestyle, she says, "I don't really give a fuck."	+2
Body dysmorphia: Battled anorexia, bulimia	-3
Neurobic: Started writing poetry at age 6; won an Ivor Novello songwriting award	+2
Dubious self-care: Her left arm has multiple long scars; claims their origin is unknown	-3
Open-minded: About a young boy gazing up her skirt during a concert: "Oh, that's nice."	+2

Estimated life expectancy	62
Projected year of death	2045

Gerontologist **DR. DAVID J. DEMKO:** "Amy's manic, boozing ways foster her roller-coaster weight, depression and unpredictable performances. She needs to seriously ground herself."

NEWS ROUNDUP

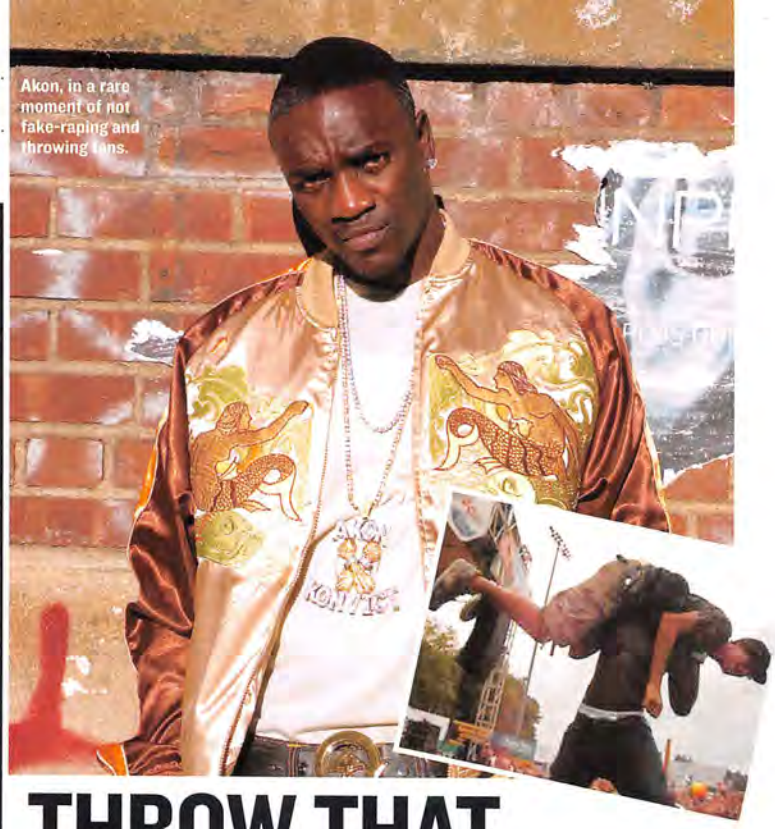
According to *The Daily Mail*, **JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE** suffered a cut above his eye when a fellow guest threw a bottle at him at a hotel in Manchester, England. Timberlake was on tour and traveling with girlfriend Jessica Biel.

The president of Taco Bell has offered **FERGIE** and her fans a free three-hour buffet of Extreme Cheese and Beef Quesadillas. Greg Creed said the singer—a dedicated customer of the fast-food chain—can set up the fiesta at any local Taco Bell along her concert tour.

ALEX JAMES of Blur admits to blowing roughly $2 million on champagne and cocaine during the 1990s. He writes in his new book, *Bit of a Blur*, that he "entertained more women than I can remember" and recalls having had a fling with Courtney Love.

WORD!

"EVERY DAY IS A NEW DISCOVERY, WHETHER IT'S A NEW HAIR COLOR, A NEW PERSON, A NEW DIET ..."
JESSICA SIMPSON, ON LIFE



Akon, in a rare moment of not fake-raping and throwing fans.

THROW THAT

AKON hurls a 15-year-old fan from the stage into the crowd

JUST A MONTH after Verizon Wireless dropped its sponsorship deal with Akon after he aggressively dry-humped an underage girl onstage in Trinidad, the "Smack That" rapper found himself in trouble again—this time for shot-putting a 15-year-old boy from the stage. This latest incident took place in Fishkill, New York, in early June during radio station WSPK's annual concert and was captured on amateur video. After the unidentified teen threw what an onlooker said appeared to be a piece of pretzel toward the stage, just missing the rapper, Akon asked his security to deliver the young man to him. Akon then hoisted the teen up on his shoulders and flung him back into the crowd.

Concertgoer Abby Rosa, 26, said she was struck by the human projectile and was later diagnosed with a concussion as a result. Akon, apparently sensing that the crowd was stunned by his WWE-style antics, told them, "See, now you got me feeling by myself. I thought I had fans and support." Akon's lawyer subsequently denied that the rapper "was involved in any criminal conduct whatsoever." As of press time, no charges had been filed. *Mark Yarm*

> Weird Band Alert

THE GUITAR ZEROS

Geeks convert *Guitar Hero* controllers into real axes

The Guitar Zeros: "Girls have cooties."

Who are these nerds?
Four San Francisco tech-heads who play Stooges-inspired rock using dual *Guitar Hero* controllers (and a real drum kit). "They hook right into a laptop," says guitarist Owen Grace, 32. "I programmed the music-generating software in two months."

What do audiences think?
"It's hard to see past the rainbow-colored buttons," Grace says. "But people say, 'Those are really rocking songs.'"

Hey, can we do this too?
Why, yes. Grace has made the software available for free on theguitarzeros.com. "We wouldn't get upset about copycat bands," he says. "I can see a gang of 13-year-old heroes totally stealing our thunder." *M. Y.*

WINEHOUSE: VINCE BUCCI/GETTY IMAGES FOR MTV; FIELDER-CIVIL: DAVID DYSON/CAMERA PRESS/RETNA; AKON: JIM COOPER/AP PHOTO; GUITAR ZEROS: BRETT NARMAS; SIMPSON: JEFF VESPA/WIREIMAGE

BRUT®

TEST DRIVE

TAKE BRUT® FOR A TEST DRIVE, RISK FREE!

NOTHING stops wetness and odor better. Count on Brut® Anti-Perspirant & Deodorant with TRIMAX®. The most advanced wetness and odor protection with the great smell of Brut.®

Buy Brut® Anti-Perspirant & Deodorant between May 1 and September 30. Guaranteed to keep you dry and fresh all day. If you aren't 100% satisfied send it back for a full refund.

BRUT.® The Essence of Man.®

If you are not completely satisfied with any Brut Anti-Perspirant & Deodorant product, just return the unused portion within 30 days of purchase for a full refund. Simply send the unused portion of the Brut Anti-Perspirant & Deodorant products, along with the original dated cash register receipt with the dollar amount circled and the retail store of purchase identified. Receipt must be dated between May 1–September 30, 2007. Include your full name and address (hand-printed) and the reason for your return. Do not return to store of purchase. Valid in U.S.A. only. Void where prohibited. Group entries are void. Please allow 6–8 weeks for processing. Limit one refund per household. For more information, go to www.bruttestdrive.com for complete details.

BRUT®

NHRA OFFICIAL SPONSOR

BRUTTESTDRIVE.COM

©2007 Idelle Labs Ltd. All Rights Reserved. BRUT®, BRUT® Medallion, TRIGUARD® TRIMAX® and Essence of Man® are registered trademarks of Helen of Troy Limited. Ron Capps name, likeness, signature and other related trademarks are licensed by Don Schumacher Racing, 2007.

Shake. And. Bake.

> WHISTLE WHILE YOU WORK

MARTIN TRUEX JR.

The NASCAR stud shares his ultimate racing playlist, from green flag to victory lane

"THE CLINCHER" CHEVELLE

"I like to listen to this right before the race to get the blood pumping and flowing, so I'm ready to go. It's an aggressive rock song that has a great, hard beat to it."

"BE QUIET AND DRIVE" DEFTONES

"If I were able to play music while racing, I would listen to this. It's kind of a numbing song, and when it's on, I find it easy to really focus on what I am doing."

"SON'S GONNA RISE" CITIZEN COPE

"This is a fun chill-out sort of song—the best for celebrating in the victory lane, having just won. The whole crew is going crazy and there's lots of champagne. It's a wild time."

"ALL I CAN DO IS WRITE ABOUT IT" LYNYRD SKYNYRD

"This is for the plane ride home after the stressful race weekend. It's a slower acoustic song, and it helps me shift gears so I can reflect on the other parts of my life."

OBITS

JOHN PIKE
23, in Fairhaven, Massachusetts. Drummer for the Syracuse, New York, indie-rock band Ra Ra Riot. Pike was reported missing June 2 and his body was recovered the next day in the waters of Buzzards Bay. Police are investigating the death.

TONY THOMPSON
31, in Waco, Texas, of an apparent drug overdose. Member of the '90s R&B teen group Hi-Five, who had hits with "I Can't Wait Another Minute" and "She's Playing Hard to Get" and a No. 1 with "I Like the Way (The Kissing Game)." Thompson's body was found June 1.

WORD!

"I WAS DOING BLOW JOBS."

LILY ALLEN, ON WHY SHE WAS KICKED OUT OF SCHOOL

"Can I get a little less shirt in my headphones?"

> IN THE STUDIO

"IT FEELS REBELLIOUS"

ALICIA KEYS juggles Hollywood, Africa and John Mayer for her first studio album in four years

A FEW DISTRACTIONS sidelined Alicia Keys on the way to making her third album, her first since 2003's *The Diary of Alicia Keys*. There was her role as an assassin in last year's *Smokin' Aces* and then as Scarlett Johansson's gal pal in the forthcoming *The Nanny Diaries*, and her ongoing charity work in Africa. "Yeah, man, it's been a real one for me," the 25-year-old singer says. "It was the most profound year of my life. The things I've had to deal with have all fed this music. Not to mention the state of this world, which we can friggin' talk all day about."

The native New Yorker says the sessions for her as-yet-untitled record started with "heavy conversations" with her collaborators—John Mayer, Linda Perry and longtime writing partner Kerry "Krucial" Brothers—in which she attempted to grasp "freedom and abandonment themes." To update her soul sound, Keys hooked up her keyboards to distortion and delay pedals, and an unlikely instrument ("I've been digging playing the bona fide harpsichord"). She likens the track "Superwoman" to the Beatles and the album's overall vibe to Aretha Franklin tackling a Janis Joplin song. "It feels rebellious, it feels aggressive, it feels passionate ... it's powerful."

Caryn Ganz

All About My Record

PRODUCERS Alicia Keys, Kerry "Krucial" Brothers, Linda Perry, Jack Splash and Mark Batson

STUDIO In L.A., Glenwood Studios and Conway Studios; in N.Y., The Oven

LAST ALBUM *The Diary of Alicia Keys*, 2003

NEW ALBUM As yet untitled, due October

> ALSO IN THE STUDIO

Reggae superstar **SEAN PAUL** is in Jamaica recording the follow-up to 2005's *The Trinity*, due late 2007. The album will address youth violence.

Chicago rapper **LUPE FIASCO** is working on the follow-up to 2006's *Lupe Fiasco's Food & Liquor*, titled *The Cool*, due late October.

Young 'uns **PANIC! AT THE DISCO** are in a Nevada cabin recording the follow-up to 2005's *A Fever You Can't Sweat Out*, due early 2008.

TRUEX JR.: HAROLD HINSON; HEADPHONES: RAINER HOLZ/ZEFA/CORBIS; KEYS: KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE; PAUL: ALBERT L. ORTEGA/WIREIMAGE; ALLEN: HAROLD CUNNINGHAM/WIREIMAGE.

 "If I navigate the river/Would you take me to your island?/Sing a Siren song so I can never leave."

SINCE 1863, BOTTLED ONLY AT SOURCE PERRIER, VERGEZE, FRANCE. THE CARBONATION IN PERRIER MINERAL WATER COMES FROM A NATURALLY OCCURRING SOURCE FOUND DEEP BENEATH THE SPRING.

SOURCE Bubblier Captured at source

©2007 NESTLÉ WATERS NORTH AMERICA INC.
CONSUMER INFORMATION: 1-800-937-2002
PRODUCT OF FRANCE Perrier

ShowMeBubblier.com

THE 33 MOST WANTED SONGS IN AMERICA

J-Tims tops Fergie in an epic showdown between *Mickey Mouse Club* and *Kids Inc.* vets

POSITION	TITLE	ARTIST	ALBUM/LABEL
1	"SUMMER LOVE"	JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE	FUTURESEX/ LOVESOUNDS *JIVE*
2	"BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY"	FERGIE	THE DUTCHESS *INTERSCOPE*
3	"MAKES ME WONDER"	MAROON 5	IT WON'T BE SOON BEFORE LONG *OCTONE/A&M*
4	"UMBRELLA"	RIHANNA	GOOD GIRL GONE BAD *DEF JAM*
5	"SOBER"	KELLY CLARKSON	MY DECEMBER *RCA*
6	"WAIT FOR YOU"	ELLIOTT YAMIN	ELLIOTT YAMIN *HICKORY*
7	"LIP GLOSS"	LIL MAMA	LIP GLOSS *JIVE*
8	"WHO KNEW"	PINK	I'M NOT DEAD *JIVE*
9	"BARTENDER"	T-PAIN FEAT. AKON	EPIPHANY *JIVE*
10	"GIRLFRIEND" (DR. LUKE REMIX)	AVRIL LAVIGNE FEAT. LIL MAMA	*RCA*
11	"WALL TO WALL"	CHRIS BROWN	EXCLUSIVE *JIVE*
12	"PARTY LIKE A ROCKSTAR"	SHOP BOYZ	ROCKSTAR MENTALITY *ON DECK/UNIVERSAL REPUBLIC*
13	"DO YOU KNOW? (THE PING PONG SONG)"	ENRIQUE IGLESIAS	INSOMNIAC *INTERSCOPE*
14	"SHUT UP AND DRIVE"	RIHANNA	GOOD GIRL GONE BAD *DEF JAM*
15	"HOME"	DAUGHTRY	DAUGHTRY *19/RCA*
16	"LOOK AFTER YOU"	THE FRAY	HOW TO SAVE A LIFE *EPIC*
17	"I DON'T NEED A MAN"	THE PUSSYCAT DOLLS	PCD *INTERSCOPE*
18	"NEVER AGAIN"	KELLY CLARKSON	MY DECEMBER *RCA*
19	"CLOTHES OFF"	GYM CLASS HEROES FEAT. PATRICK STUMP	AS CRUEL AS SCHOOL CHILDREN *DECAYDANCE/ FUELED BY RAMEN*
20	"LOVE STORY"	KATHARINE McPHEE	KATHARINE McPHEE *RCA*
21	"4 IN THE MORNING"	GWEN STEFANI	THE SWEET ESCAPE *INTERSCOPE*
22	"BEFORE HE CHEATS"	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	SOME HEARTS *RCA*
23	"GIVE IT UP"	TWISTA FEAT. PHARRELL	ADRENALINE RUSH 2007 *ATLANTIC*
24	"HEY THERE DELILAH"	PLAIN WHITE T'S	EVERY SECOND COUNTS *HOLLYWOOD*
25	"WHAT I'VE DONE"	LINKIN PARK	MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT *MACHINE SHOP/WARNER BROS.*
26	"MY LOVE"	CIARA	CIARA: THE EVOLUTION *LA FACE*
27	"POP, LOCK & DROP IT"	HUEY	STOMP THE YARD SOUNDTRACK *JIVE*
28	"BECAUSE OF YOU"	NE-YO	BECAUSE OF YOU *DEF JAM*
29	"CAN U BELIEVE"	ROBIN THICKE	THE EVOLUTION OF ROBIN THICKE *INTERSCOPE*
30	"I WONDER"	KELLIE PICKLER	SMALL TOWN GIRL *19/BNA*
31	"THNKS FR TH MMRS"	FALL OUT BOY	INFINITY ON HIGH *ISLAND*
32	"I TRIED"	BONE THUGS-N-HARMONY FEAT. AKON	STRENGTH & LOYALTY *INTERSCOPE*
33	"BEAUTIFUL LIAR"	BEYONCÉ FEAT. SHAKIRA	B'DAY *COLUMBIA/ SONY URBAN MUSIC*

WEEK ENDING // JUNE 24, 2007

2 FERGIE

"BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY"

THE DUTCHESS

See, life for Fergie ain't all humps and the ecstatic spelling of simple vocabulary—crank this downbeat single loud and know her inner pain! This month, the Black Eyed Pea swoops solo from Los Angeles (7/18) to Denver (7/22) to Vegas (7/28).

6 ELLIOTT YAMIN

"WAIT FOR YOU"

ELLIOTT YAMIN

For anyone who's ever called a cable repairman; for anyone who's ever awaited a mattress delivery: This song about infinite patience goes straight out to you. Catch the American not-quite idol live in August in Norfolk, Virginia.

10 AVRIL LAVIGNE FEAT. LIL MAMA

"GIRLFRIEND" (DR. LUKE REMIX)

Pop-punk's bratty queen bee enlists everyone's favorite lip-gloss advocate to hop on this officially sanctioned remix. Double the 'tude, double the fun! Fans in the Far East can catch Avril (sans Mama) in August as she pogos her way through Tokyo, Osaka and Hong Kong.

29 ROBIN THICKE

"CAN U BELIEVE"

THE EVOLUTION OF ROBIN THICKE

The artist formerly (and regrettably) known as Thicke continues his impressive run with this silky, keep-the-faith slow jam. *As long as we got each other, baby!* See him on the East Coast all month as he opens for Beyoncé from Tampa to Philly to Montreal.

HOW WE DID IT

aolmusic.com

The Most Wanted Songs chart is based on the number of audience searches, downloads and video plays on AOLmusic.com.

FERGIE: CHRIS BALDWIN; LAVIGNE: MARK LIDDELL; THICKE: BEN WATTS.

 "You can have my girl/But don't touch my hat."

ShowMeTrendier.com

FINGER ELEVEN

·THEM·VS·YOU·VS·ME·

AVAILABLE ON iTUNES

FEATURING "PARALYZER"

PHOTO: ANDREW MACNAUGHTAN

Wind-up®

fingereleven.com

©2007 Wind-up Records, LLC windupprecords.com

Homer's Fave Band * Cobain Phlegm * Comeback 101

INSIDER

[KNOWING STUFF IS GOOD]

Weiland in his days as a steward on S&M Airways.

SCOTT WEILAND

Wanna know which drug the Velvet Revolver frontman *hasn't* done? Thought so... (P. 58)

FROM TOP: JAMES WHITE/CORBIS OUTLINE; JODY CORTES/WENN.

Orbit
SWEET MINT

COMEBACK DO'S AND DON'TS

ELVIS AND **MARIAH** GOT IT RIGHT; JEWEL AND **VANILLA ICE** GOT IT EMBARRASSINGLY WRONG: AS **BRITNEY** READIES HERSELF FOR A RETURN FROM THREE YEARS IN THE POP WILDERNESS, *BLENDER* PRESENTS A HANDY GUIDE TO THE DELICATE BUSINESS OF STAGING A COMEBACK

By DAVID PEISNER

Even with her eyes closed, Mariah Carey can tell where your gaze is directed. Eerie.

Do's

☑ WEAR LEATHER ☑ GO ON THE OFFENSIVE ☑ BUY GOOD SONGS

ELVIS PRESLEY

BEFORE: After leaving the Army in 1960, Elvis quit performing live to turn his musical attention to recording lackluster soundtracks to his wretched movies. As the hits dried up, Elvis became doughy and irrelevant—when he met the Beatles in 1965, their press agent deemed the erstwhile King of Rock & Roll "a boring old fart."

AFTER: Presley reemerged on a one-hour TV special in December 1968, looking tanned and trim in skintight black leather and sounding like a man with something to prove. The show set the benchmark for comebacks, as afterward he scored monster smashes with "In the Ghetto" and "Suspicious Minds," and hit the road again with sellout tours that broke attendance records.

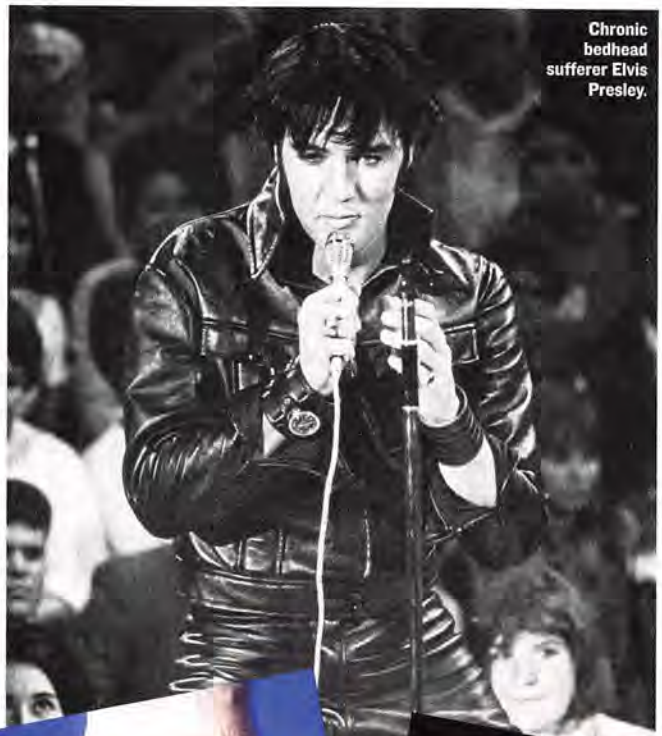
LESSON LEARNED: Never underestimate the power of a leather suit and a good diet.

AEROSMITH

BEFORE: By 1978, Toxic Twins Steven Tyler and Joe Perry had stopped speaking to each other. Aerosmith's late-'70s albums tanked, and Perry quit. But the band limped on, having the roadies dash onstage to catch the perpetually blotto Tyler whenever he keeled over. The original lineup reconvened for 1985's unfocused *Done With Mirrors*, which restored some of their early swagger but generated little public enthusiasm.

AFTER: Tyler and Perry were neither clean nor sober when Rick Rubin convinced them to hop on Run-D.M.C.'s groundbreaking cover of "Walk This Way." Its success occasioned rehab trips for the whole band and introduced Aerosmith to a new audience. It also set a successful template for the band's future: 1987's slick, strutting, multi-platinum *Permanent Vacation*—like its profitable successors—relied heavily on outside writers and song doctors, and cemented the band's comeback.

LESSON LEARNED: If you're out of ideas, use someone else's.



Chronic bedhead sufferer Elvis Presley.

LL Cool J prepares to go 12 rounds with Gilligan; Rod Stewart suddenly wishes he hadn't ordered the grande burrito.

ROD STEWART

BEFORE: At the end of the '90s, Rod Stewart's roller-coaster career finally hit the skids: Radio wouldn't touch him; his supermodel wife, Rachel Hunter, ditched him and took up with Robbie Williams; throat surgery for thyroid cancer threatened to silence his famously raspy pipes forever ... Finally, in 2000, his attempt to reinvent himself with a glossy contemporary-R&B album, *Human*, flopped, and he parted ways with Atlantic Records.

AFTER: J Records honcho Clive Davis signed Stewart, who wanted to release a synth-heavy album of pre-rock-era standards he'd recorded himself. Clive liked the concept but hated the record, so they hired an orchestra, fiddled with the song selection and crafted 2002's *It Had to Be You: The Great American Songbook*. The album sold more than 3 million copies in the U.S. alone, spawned three identically themed and wildly successful sequels, and transformed Stewart into a matinee idol for the geriatric set.

LESSON LEARNED: The asswaggling can't go on forever.

LL COOL J

BEFORE: LL Cool J took a risk dropping the gushy rap ballad "I Need Love" in 1987—although the song became a gargantuan hit, his label boss Russell Simmons called it "homo, New Edition bullshit." Two years later, the radio-friendly *Walking With a Panther* album was met with cries of "sellout" by a rap world newly enamored of gangsta realism—and he was booed offstage at New York's Apollo Theater.

AFTER: "Don't call it a comeback/I've been here for years," LL barked on 1990's "Mama Said Knock You Out," a pounding answer to his critics. On the album that followed, new producer Marley Marl's booming funk beats helped court hardcore hip-hop heads without sacrificing pop appeal. A watershed *MTV Unplugged* appearance further broadened LL's audience, setting the stage for the second act to a career that has outlasted any of his contemporaries'.

LESSON LEARNED: If all else fails, threaten violence.

MARIAH CAREY

BEFORE: After signing an $80 million contract in 2000, the biggest-selling female artist of the '90s came undone. In the run-up to the release of her film biopic, *Glitter*, Carey left troubling messages on her Web site and was rumored to be communicating with Marilyn Monroe through her piano, before she eventually admitted herself to a Connecticut hospital for "exhaustion." Both the film and its soundtrack were historic bombs, and her record label paid her $28 million to go away. A bland, underperforming follow-up sealed her apparent demise.

AFTER: Mariah huddled with an R&B who's who (including Kanye West, Jermaine Dupri and the Neptunes), reined in her famous five-octave vocal range and reemerged with *The Emancipation of Mimi*: a soulful, defiant beat-and-groove workout that became 2005's biggest seller and earned eight Grammy nominations.

LESSON LEARNED: Insanity is fun, but it doesn't sell records.

PRESLEY: FRANK CARROLL/SYGMA/CORBIS; STEWART: ROBERT MORA/GETTY IMAGES; LL COOL J: PAM SPRINGSTEEN/CORBIS; TYLER: ILPO MUSTO/REX USA; RUN-D.M.C.: DAVID PLASTIK/RETNA.

Don'ts

☑ EMBRACE JESUS ☑ TRY NÜ-METAL ☑ PRETEND TO BE GANGSTA

VANILLA ICE

BEFORE: After releasing 1990's *To the Extreme*—still one of the best-selling rap albums of all time—Vanilla Ice was slammed for both faking a gang-banging backstory and watering down hip-hop for suburban white kids. He starred in *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II* and descended into a drug-blitzed haze that led to a suicide attempt.

AFTER: A dreadful, Cypress Hill–biting 1994 album attracted more scorn, but eventually Ice quit drugs and found Jesus. In 1998, he returned with a nü-metal makeover, *Hard to Swallow*: Tatted-up and sporting a goatee, the former pop-rap pretty boy spewed rage to anyone who'd listen. Not many would: He split with his record label but has carried on making music for an ever-diminishing audience of extreme-sports nuts and dedicated ironists.

LESSON LEARNED: Experimental facial hair and shouting do not constitute a "new direction."

LAURYN HILL

BEFORE: *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*—1998's astonishing, demon-exorcising rap-soul hybrid—made Lauryn Hill the biggest female star in hip-hop history. Then she disappeared. After settling a lawsuit with four collaborators who claimed she screwed them out of credits, she fired her management, had two kids with Rohan Marley and reportedly fell under the sway of a religious guru named Brother Anthony.

AFTER: In July 2001, Hill reappeared to play *MTV Unplugged No. 2.0*. Strumming an acoustic guitar she could barely play and singing in a hoarse rasp, she stumbled through 13 raw, introspective tunes, pausing occasionally to offer an unhinged commentary and/or to cry. This unfortunate public unraveling was later released as a CD that sold just enough copies to ensure everyone knew that Ms. Hill—as she now insisted on being called—had lost her shit.

LESSON LEARNED: There's a fine line between soulfully heartfelt and potentially psychotic.

Missing: Pair of matching Hammer mittens.

Hill: "Cuckoo! Cuckoo!"; Jewel shows off her new "radioactive stripper" look.

HAMMER

BEFORE: Fueled by his vast pants, fleet feet and "Superfreak"-jacking hit, Hammer sold more than 10 million copies of 1990's *Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'Em*. The follow-up, *Too Legit to Quit*, was launched amid a media onslaught that included Hammer dolls, lunchboxes and a Saturday-morning cartoon, but moved far fewer units. With gangsta-rap ascendent, Hammer's family-friendly style made him an industry joke, and in 1992, he parted ways with his label.

AFTER: Hammer traded the parachute pants for a thuggish wife-beater and skullcap for 1994's *The Funky Headhunter*. The album, on which Hammer indulges pimp fantasies and describes himself as "the ultimate OG," went platinum despite widespread ridicule. But by 1996 he'd declared bankruptcy, after a carnival of overspending that would forever enshrine him as a hip-hop cautionary tale.

LESSON LEARNED: If you've appeared on a child's lunchbox, you're probably not a gangsta.

JEWEL

BEFORE: Jewel's massive 1995 folk-pop debut, *Pieces of You*, vaulted her to the head of the Lilith Fair class. But when the follow-up fizzled, the part-time poet retreated to the Texas ranch of her rodeo-star boyfriend, vowing never to record again. She reneged on her promise in 2001, with a third album that fared little better.

AFTER: In 2003, Jewel teamed with Shakira's producer and refashioned herself as a Madonna-aping dance-pop sex kitten. "I knew we were headed to war," Jewel told *Blender* in 2003. "And I felt I knew where popular culture was headed." Turns out she didn't: Consumers stayed away in droves, and she was lambasted for sexing up her image. She claimed her first single's wet-T-shirt-sporting video was satire, an assertion that felt considerably less sincere after she sold the song to Schick for use in a razor commercial.

LESSON LEARNED: Everyone knows poets can't dance.

MA$E

BEFORE: In 1997, Ma$e emerged as Puff Daddy's fresh-faced sidekick. His syrupy flow enchanted millions into buying his club-friendly debut, *Harlem World*, but when album No. 2 stalled in 1999, he shocked hip-hop by hanging up the mic, relocating to Atlanta, becoming a pastor and writing a book denouncing hip-hop.

AFTER: Prodded by Nelly to drop a rhyme on his 2004 album, *Sweatsuit*, Ma$e eventually relented, offering a corny verse to "In My Life," setting the tone for his full-fledged return to recording. On *Welcome Back*, the God-fearing Ma$e tried to wash out hip-hop's filthy mouth: There's no naughty language, no talk of *niggas* and *hos*—he even exhorts girls "to keep they legs closed." But tepid sales and disses from ol' pal Cam'ron sent Ma$e into the arms of G-Unit—with whom he recorded the gun-waving, Diddy-and-Brandy-attacking, *nigga*-and-*ho*-spouting "Check Cleared."

LESSON LEARNED: Jesus won't pay your bills.

VANILLA ICE: SCOTT HARRISON/GETTY IMAGES; HAMMER: S.I.N./CORBIS; JEWEL: ERIC OGDEN/RETNA; HILL: TIM MOSENFELDER/GETTY IMAGES.

SCOTT WEILAND

THE VELVET REVOLVER STAR ON PHIL SPECTOR (GUILTY), AXL (WEIRD-LOOKING) AND THE COOLEST WAY HE KNOWS TO KILL SOMEONE (UM, ROCKET LAUNCHER)

By JONAH WEINER
Photograph by AMANDA DE CADENET

WHEN YOU'RE INVITED to Scott Weiland's house, this is what you expect: a half-naked model at the door, a mirrored ceiling, leather pants strewn across a red shag carpet, perhaps some large marble statues of snakes. This, however, is what you get: a cast-iron coffee table straight out of a Pottery Barn catalogue, a framed picture of two beaming toddlers at a theme park and baskets of organic snacks and spring water on the spotless kitchen counter. A model does open the door, but it's Scott's wife of seven years, Mary, and not only is she fully clothed, she's wearing a comfy, oversize cardigan. *This* Sherman Oaks, California, spread is where the Velvet Revolver frontman—the same guy who has been arrested for possession of controlled substances four times, and imprisoned for said substances once—lays his bones?

Now, at 39, Weiland is all about stability. For the past three and a half years, one of rock's most storied junkies has been living clean and sober. He's got Mary and his two children to think about, not to mention a band full of similarly reformed drugbuckets who help keep him on the up and up. But that doesn't mean he's gone boring: Velvet Revolver's new album, *Libertad*, is a slithering monument to L.A. hard-rock sleaze, albeit with a dash of social consciousness. And when Weiland emerges from his bedroom, he's wearing motorcycle boots, skinny jeans and a white shirt opened to his navel, several necklaces slapping against his skin. He slides on designer sunglasses, lights up the first of many cigarettes and steps onto his backyard patio, sitting *Blender* down in full view of his child-proofed in-ground pool. "All right," he says. "Let's see how painful this is." >>

Weiland, making the most of semicasual Thursday.

You liked to play dress-up as a kid. What's the craziest outfit you can remember?
hyenatearz, Port Jefferson, NY

When I was 9 or 10, I used to spend summers with my dad in California and the rest of the year with my mother in Ohio. One summer my dad took me to see *Saturday Night Fever*, and when I went back to Chagrin Falls, I was determined to put together a Tony Manero outfit. I'd gotten a pair of Angels Flight pants; I borrowed a silk shirt from my mother, unbuttoned it all the way down and put on four-inch platform shoes I took from my grandmother. I went to school like that, and I didn't get the reaction I was hoping for. I don't think I attempted another rock-star outfit until I actually had a band. I would still dress up in private, though.

What songs do you remember from your time as a choirboy?
juliette.marshall, Elizabeth, NJ

There's still some bits and pieces of Brahms, Mozart's "Requiem." I learned all 32 opuses of the "Liebeslieder" waltz, in German. I remember a few hymns and madrigals—you rehearse them so much, those things stick with you. I'm still a practicing Catholic, and it's an interesting dichotomy: I haven't lived my life like a perfect Catholic, but I don't think you have to. I believe in the Devil: I experienced some very bizarre things when I was in the height of my addiction—popped a cork in the genie bottle and felt the Devil—not, like, literally Satan, but energy from that side of the spectrum.

The sopranos: Weiland in his pre-grunge days.

Drag race (clockwise from top left): High jinks ensue when Weiland asks two dates to the Fetish Ball; onstage with Slash; "Avon calling!"

Please describe your worst haircut ever.
ydiomatyc, Sedona, AZ

The faux hawk. I went to my wife's hairdresser a few years ago, and it was sort of done to me. It was a hair rape. I felt like an idiot.

In high school, you quarterbacked your football team and wrestled—what kind of self-respecting outcast were you?
diceteeth, Astoria, NY

One with a lot of cojones. I was never a jock, but I was an athlete, and I was good. I went to a school called Edison in Huntington Beach, right when they had just won multiple state football titles; it was a hardcore football school. I had aspirations of going to Notre Dame, so I played quarterback. But also I was into music: I sang in the school choir; and the two worlds didn't really hold hands skipping down the hallways. I got a lot of flak from the coach and the guys on the team. Then I formed a rock & roll band with my best friend, and at the start of the senior year, I decided that I was into music more.

What's the secret to pulling off man makeup?
crude_awakening, Missoula, MT

You either got it or you don't.

Part of your drug rehab involved martial arts training. What's the most badass way you know to kill a man?
infinityonhigh, Lake Jackson, TX

When we train with martial arts, they don't teach specific ways to end a person's life. So I suppose I could say that the most badass way to kill a person is with a rocket launcher.

The new Velvet Revolver record was supposed to be a concept album—what happened?
hugsanddrugs730, Antimony, UT

We had the title *Libertad* before we ever had an album. Slash came into the dressing room one day and he had a copy of an old Chilean coin with a woman breaking shackles above her head, and on the coin it said LIBERTAD. And Duff came in later that week and he had a T-shirt on that said LIBERTAD. I've been thinking a lot about the lack of freedom in our country—it seems more and more we're heading in this direction that's almost like Nazi Germany in the early '30s. I tried to think of a concept that would embody that, but we had a bunch of stops and starts in the writing process, and it just didn't work out. So we just went at the album more organically, but when you listen to it, there is totally this "liberty" theme running through it.

> "I EXPERIENCED VERY BIZARRE THINGS IN THE HEIGHT OF MY ADDICTION."

What are you gonna be doing when you're 65?
5ibilants, Chattahoochee, FL

Hopefully, breathing. You know, riding horses, fishing, [takes a drag from a cigarette] not smoking, having a great relationship with my wife and kids. I'd still like to be writing songs, but I don't wanna be shaking my ass onstage anymore. Doing music in a dignified manner—not in size-27 skinny jeans.

What book should everyone read?
hell2pay, Grand Forks, ND

The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, by William L. Shirer. It's one of the most >>

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ROBERT MATHEW/RETNA; CHARLIE STEFFENS/WENN; MELANIE WEINER/RETNA; CLASSMATES MEDIA INC.

You'd recognize him anywhere.
So would your V CAST phone.

Introducing V CAST Song ID.

Hear a song. ID it. Then download it straight to your phone. Use it to identify Prince's latest single, "Guitar," and get it free. Exclusively from Verizon Wireless. To find out more go to verizonwireless.com/music.

verizonwireless.com/music

V CAST Music phone and airtime required for use. Offers & coverage, varying by service and handset, not available everywhere.

verizonwireless

horrific books I've ever read, and it's very pertinent today.

What was the single worst day of your life?
walter.pk, Benton City, WA

I have two. When I got arrested for possession for the fourth time, I felt beyond a shadow of a doubt that I would lose my wife and kids. I was either gonna get clean or hang myself. The other was the day my brother died, earlier this year. It was an overdose, but it was horrible not knowing whether it was suicide or not—we just assumed it was due to the state he'd been in. The coroner's report finally came back, and it was cardiomyopathy, the same thing that killed Jim Morrison. He was four and a half years younger than me. We were always really close as kids. We'd get kicked out of the house and hole up together. But then we hit this stretch where I'd get clean and he'd be using, then he'd get clean and I'd be using, and that sort of made the distance grow between us. Finally, three and a half years ago, I got clean, and we pretty much stopped talking. I said I'd never be judgmental toward anybody, but I started to be toward him 'cause it pissed me off so much. He was losing his family right in front of his eyes. The police found a message he'd scribbled across his fridge, telling himself to stay alive for his daughters.

> "WHEN I GOT ARRESTED FOR POSSESSION THE FOURTH TIME, I WAS EITHER GONNA GET CLEAN OR HANG MYSELF."

Your wife recently burned $10,000 worth of your clothing. What made her so mad?
EddyShreddy, Washington, MO

I don't wanna answer that. Things are going well. That's the great thing about our relationship. We're crazy about each other. And a little bit crazy. That's why we've been together so long.

What Web sites do you have bookmarked?
Jolenesd, Sioux Falls, SD

That's the running joke—I am just not up with the times on that stuff. Probably the only thing would be Notre Dame football sites. They have their own site, and there are a few fan sites. But, like, I don't know how MySpace works. I just don't get it.

What would it take for Stone Temple Pilots to get back together?
Purplepeople, Franklin, TN

Time. Time that I don't have now. The resentment and ill will we harbored for each other has dwindled. We've talked, and we've made amends. There's definitely a part of me that would love to put a nice bookend on that story, to make a great record that would finish things up. But I'm so busy with Velvet Revolver, and when I'm not with them, I go to my studio and try to finish my solo record. But I'm not ruling it out.

You called Axl Rose a "fat, Botox-faced, wig-wearing fuck." What did he ever do to you?
Ladyday1492, Columbus, OH

He's definitely interesting-looking, isn't he? I can't remember what our spat was about, but there was a period of a couple weeks where he was going off on his Web site or saying stuff in interviews about me. It was after Velvet Revolver had been touring for about a year, and I go through periods where I can be sort of antagonistic. If somebody says something that rubs me the wrong way, I'll launch back. If his feelings were hurt, he shouldn't have said anything in the first place.

We Are The Fury
Venus

Red
End Of Silence

Plain White T's
Every Second Counts

August Burns Red
Messengers

3 Inches Of Blood
Fire Up The Blades

AVAILABLE JULY 24

Within Temptation
The Heart Of Everything

K-OS
Atlantis: Hymns For Disco

The Almost
Southern Weather

Did Phil Spector do it?
vesuvius7, Radnor, PA

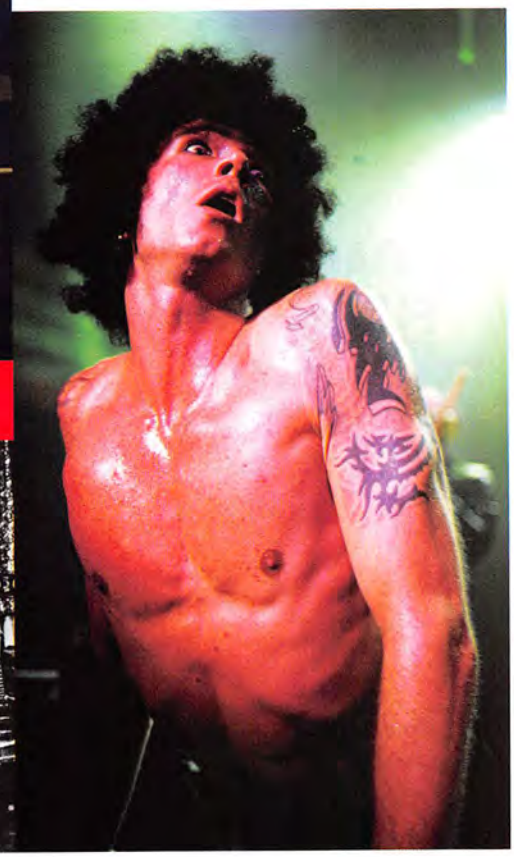
Uh ... of course he did. I mean, how could he not have? There wasn't anyone else there with a gun, and no one drives to someone's house who they don't know just to commit suicide.

Is rock & roll dead?
spazatack, Shelton, CT

No, I think it's just in hibernation. We're an anomaly—I don't think there are any other bands under 50 who do it at this level. We have fans who've been buying our records for a few generations, but the majority of our fans are young. There's U2, but they're older than us, they're over 50 [*all are actually in their late 40s*] and the majority of their fans are over 30. I don't know how you'd characterize us within the context of rock & roll. There are some great bands coming up, though. My favorite new band is Silversun Pickups. Local boys done good. They remind me of early Smashing Pumpkins.

Which drugs have you never done?
jonny.semtex, Oak Ridge, TN

I've done just about everything at least once. There are a couple I've never done, and that's just because I couldn't find them. Quaaludes—never got a hold of the "leg spreaders"—and Seconals. Both over before my time. I wish I could've gotten a hold of 'em, though. Missed the boat on that! [BLENDER]



No shirt, no service (clockwise from top): Onstage with wife Mary; Weiland wigs out; trolling for hookahs with Stone Temple Pilots.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ETHAN MILLER/REUTERS/CORBIS; DENNIS KLEIMAN/RETNA; LEN IRISH/CORBIS OUTLINE.

The best venue to discover great new bands.

Each month, we scour the music scene to find the most promising, talented and innovative new artists. When you want to check out some new music, head to Best Buy where there's never a cover charge.

Look for our Find 'Em First section in store and at BestBuy.com®

BEST BUY PRESENTS FIND 'EM FIRST

BEST BUY

© 2007 Best Buy. All Rights Reserved. Best Buy, the Best Buy logo and the tag design are trademarks of Best Buy Enterprise Services, Inc.

32542

... And that's when the Memorial Day party got weird.

GRAND FUNK

"We're an American Band"

How Homer Simpson's favorite group conquered haters and financial ruin to write the National Anthem of Rock

(BY JOSH EELLS)

IF FM RADIO had a Gettysburg Address, "We're an American Band" would be it. Brilliant in its simplicity, it's the crowd-pleasing cornerstone of red-blooded American rock. Ironic, then, that it came from one of the most detested bands in the country.

Grand Funk Railroad formed in 1968, in the crumbling auto town of Flint, Michigan. A jammy, R&B-derived power trio consisting of frontman Mark Farner, bassist Mel Schacher and drummer Don Brewer, the band was public enemy No. 1 for "serious" music fans, who derided them as no-talent mooks and/or opportunists cashing in on a scene. One magazine sniffed, simply: "The worst band of all time."

JULY 1973 — 34 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

"They were the Limp Bizkit of the '70s," producer Todd Rundgren tells *Blender*. "They had a huge fan base, but almost no one was on their side." Not even Rundgren: "Their records were just horrible," he says.

Still, in 1971 GFR sold out a concert at Shea Stadium faster than the Beatles had, and before long, the band members were all millionaires. At least they thought they were. It turned out their svengali manager, a shameless publicity hound and self-styled villain named Terry Knight, had been mismanaging the band's finances.

"We were totally screwed," Brewer says. "Terry controlled all the money." After a flurry of lawsuits, the two sides reached a grudging compromise: The band kept the name, and Knight kept everything else.

Defeated, broke and at a creative dead end, the trio started from scratch in 1973. Shortening their name to Grand Funk, they added a keyboardist and streamlined their sound. "We needed hits if we were going to survive," Brewer says. So the drummer studied dozens of popular songs and came up with "We're an American Band," an exuberant tall tale about life on the road. Full of boozy high jinks and colorful characters, the song was absurdly straightforward: just three basic power chords, a cowbell-heavy backbeat and a monster hook. It sounded like a tour bus full of groupies barreling down the highway at 95 mph.

The band teamed with Rundgren, a studio Midas then riding a hot streak, at Miami's Criteria Studios. "It was remarkable," Rundgren says. "We recorded the song the first day, mixed and mastered it the second, and a week later, it's in the Top 10. It sold a million copies before we even left the studio." Two months later, the single was No. 1.

Partly, it was a case of good timing. The U.S. was still reeling from Vietnam and growing anxious about Watergate; in these turbulent times, "We're an American Band" was like a big, red-white-and-blue thumbs-up. "I wasn't trying to wave a flag," Brewer says. "I just wanted to show that not every song needed to be a protest song."

The single also tapped into a kind of proudly un-hip Middle American joie de vivre, epitomized by GFR's most famous fan, one Homer J. Simpson. In the 1996 *Simpsons* episode "Homerpalooza," the potbellied patriarch is driving the kids to school when a Grand Funk song comes on the radio. He cranks it up, to Bart and Lisa's colossal chagrin: The kids dismiss it with a scoff and an eye-roll. "Nobody knows the band Grand Funk?" Homer asks incredulously. "Mark Farner's wild, shirtless lyrics? The bong-rattling bass of Mel Schacher? The competent drumwork of Don Brewer?"

"Homer is the ultimate Grand Funk fan—a regular Joe," Brewer says. "We were really a Des Moines, Iowa, kind of band. It's not about the snooty, big-city rock & roll snobs. It's about the people." [BLENDER]

Vital Statistics

Song "We're an American Band"
Artist Grand Funk
Label Capitol
Performers Don Brewer (*drums, vocals*), Mark Farner (*guitar*), Mel Schacher (*bass*), Craig Frost (*keyboards*)
Writer Don Brewer
Producer Todd Rundgren
Chart debut July 28, 1973
Highest chart position 1

LYNN GOLDSMITH/CORBIS.

© Lorillard 2007

Newport® pleasure!

Lights Box: 9 mg. "tar," 0.8 mg. nicotine; Medium Box: 13 mg. "tar," 1.0 mg.nicotine; Box: 18 mg. "tar," 1.3 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.

Newport, Newport Medium, Newport (package design), Newport Pleasure and Newport Spinnaker TM Lorillard Licensing Company LLC Reg. U.S. Pat. & Tm. Off.

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, And May Complicate Pregnancy.

Visit us at newport-pleasure.com

Restricted To Adult Smokers 21 or Older.

ASK BLENDER

(Solving Your Pop Conundrums Since 2001)

What's this DRM thing I keep reading about? I think it has something to do with MP3s.

Anthony Hearn, Taos, NM

We'll assume you mean digital rights management, and not the Deutsche reichsmark, the chief form of German currency between 1924 and 1948. (Although that's a great story, too.)

Put simply, DRM is any sort of technology used to discourage digital copyright infringement—what fancy-pants lawyer types call "piracy." In the music world, this typically means a layer of software on a CD or audio file that prevents listeners from copying it. Think of it as a kind of padlock on your MP3s—you're free to play the songs all you want, but you can't reproduce them.

Questions of legality aside, the problem with DRM is that, since not all the software is compatible with all digital-music players, it's often difficult for fans to listen to music they've purchased legally. Earlier this year, Amazon said it would start selling DRM-free downloads that can be played on any device. It looks like DRM's days may be numbered.

Lately I've been hearing a lot about "snitching" in hip-hop (e.g., CAM'RON). Any idea where the "Stop Snitchin'" thing got its start?

Luke Shipley, Annapolis, MD

Concerns about snitching have certainly been enveloping many rap stars these days, from Busta Rhymes's hardheaded refusal to cooperate with police in the investigation over his bodyguard's murder to Cam'ron's *60 Minutes* interview with Anderson Cooper, in which the rapper said that even if he knew a serial killer were living next door, he wouldn't turn him in—though he would move. But despite the current vogue of the anti-snitch movement, the stool pigeon is at least as old as Judas. Hip-hop culture gets its reluctance to cozy up to authorities from all sorts of sources: the notorious *Stop Snitching* DVDs that first surfaced in Baltimore three years ago; Black America's traditional (and often warranted) mistrust of the law; even the ancient Sicilian concept of *omerta*, the gangster code of silence glorified in so many Mafia movies. Still, amid all the current hoopla, it's worth remembering that rappers aren't the only ones who look unkindly on narcs. Just ask Scooter Libby.

Did KURT COBAIN really once spit on ELTON JOHN's piano?

Gabe Bautista, San Antonio, TX

Indeed he did—but it was a mistake. He meant to spit on Axl Rose's.

The inadvertent expectoration happened in September 1992, during the MTV Video Music Awards. For a few months prior, Cobain had been taunting Rose in the press and very publicly declining repeated invitations to open GNR's tour. When Cobain's wife, Courtney Love, spotted Rose in the VIP waiting area before the ceremony, she fanned the flames further, mockingly asking him to be godfather to their newborn daughter. Rose responded by yelling at Cobain to "Shut your bitch up," then challenging him to a fight. Cobain just laughed.

That night, Nirvana took the stage to perform their latest single, "Lithium." After the song, as the band was walking offstage, Cobain noticed two pianos set up for GNR's performance of "November Rain" later in the night—one for Rose, and one for special guest Elton John, who was sitting in. Cobain picked the one he thought was Rose's, cleared his throat and hocked a giant loogie right on the keys. It was only later, watching John and Rose perform from backstage, that he realized he had guessed wrong. No word on whether Sir Elton (or his fingers) ever noticed.

Cobain and Rose compete in the great Constipation-Face Showdown of 1992.

I was wondering: Has any group ever booked its own tribute band as an opening act?

Claudette Metz, Wantagh, NY

Here at *Blender*, we're suckers for a novel tribute band, be it MiniKiss (a cover band composed entirely of painted-faced little people) or Mandonna, "the alpha-male tribute to the Material Girl." So we're happy to report that the answer is yes.

There've been a couple of prank examples, such as NYC goofballs They Might Be Giants opening for themselves as a TMBG cover band called Sapphire Bullets, or Devo taking the stage before their 1979 New Year's Eve show disguised as a Christian-rock Devo cover band called Dove, the Band of Love.

But the pinnacle of the concept was reached in 1987, when the English art-punks Wire hired a tribute band called Ex-Lion Tamers to open for them on their first U.S. tour. The Tamers, named after a song on Wire's 1977 debut, *Pink Flag*, would take the stage to play that album from start to finish, precisely duplicating even the length of silence between songs. Wire refused to acknowledge the stunt, going so far as to claim in interviews that the Ex-Lion Tamers were the only band they'd ever been influenced by. But it was clearly some sort of postmodern joke: The name of the tour was The Ideal Copy.

Oh, and a Kiss cover band called Desstroyer also opened for Gene Simmons and Co. during their 1995 Kiss Convention Tour. Sadly, though, they weren't midgets.

Snow White is about to get rocked.

Ask Blender

askblender@blender.com

1040 Sixth Avenue, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10018

Please include your first and last name, your hometown and your state or province.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ANDY PARADISE/WIREIMAGE; GIE KNAEPS/LFI-FGN; MICHAEL PUTLAND/RETNA UK; SPLASH NEWS; JEN MALER/RETNA; WALIK GOSHORN/RETNA.

STANDING UP FOR YOURSELF IS STRONG.
STANDING UP FOR THOSE AROUND YOU
IS ARMY STRONG.
There's strong. And then there's Army Strong. The strength
that comes from not just changing your life but changing the lives of others.
Find out more at goarmy.com/strong.
U.S.ARMY
ARMY STRONG.
Staff Sergeant Jeremy Mutart
©2007. Paid for by the United States Army. All rights reserved.

KELLY CLARKSON BLOWS BUBBLES—IN A NON-MICHAEL JACKSON SENSE.

KELLY CLARKSON AND THE

HER BOYFRIEND **BROKE HER HEART**, HER LABEL HATES HER NEW RECORD—AND **AMERICA'S SWEETHEART** COULDN'T CARE LESS. **"LIFE'S TOO SHORT TO BE A PUSHOVER,"** SHE SAYS

By CRAIG MARKS

Photographs by MARTIN SCHOELLER

BUBBLEGUM MACHINE

IT'S A PERFECT

American Idol moment. At the Kodak Theatre in West Hollywood, 48 hours before Jordin Sparks will be crowned winner of the 2007 competition, the champions from seasons one through five, absent Fantasia, have gathered onstage to rehearse a medley of songs from the Beatles' 1967 LP, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. *Sgt. Pepper* is, of course, the landmark album widely considered the greatest long-player in the history of rock & roll, hailed for dragging rock out of adolescent backseats and bedrooms and conferring upon it the intellectual aspirations and emotional complexities of proper art. *American Idol*, of course, is the phenomenally successful televised singing contest that made Sanjaya Malakar our Beatles.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of *Sgt. Pepper*'s release, and to the delight of the producers of *American Idol*, the notoriously protective Beatles camp has granted the show permission to perform four songs from the album. And so, on Wednesday night's season finale, 30.7 million viewers will be reminded of the sophisticated splendor of the Beatles' cultural touchstone, and, more subtly but no less pertinent, the peerless clout of the *American Idol* franchise. Baby boomers, their children and their grandchildren will find common ground, raise their voices as one, maybe sniff back a tear or two, then share a Coke Zero and test-drive a Ford Focus.

There's only one problem. Well, actually, three. To start, season-two winner Ruben "The Velvet Teddy Bear" Studdard is clearly unfamiliar with the song he's been asked to perform, "Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds." It's quite possible he's unfamiliar with the group who sang it, too, but never mind. As he squints at the teleprompter, scrolling through lysergic rhymes about "tangerine trees" and "marmalade skies," Studdard looks vaguely dyspeptic, like an American tourist confronted with a plate of snails.

Carrie Underwood, too, is struggling. Casually beautiful in a black CASH hoodie and cargo shorts, the season-four title holder has drawn the night's most difficult assignment, "She's Leaving Home," one of *Sgt. Pepper*'s lesser-known tracks. She suffers one blonde moment after another, flubbing lines and missing cues. Her vocals are much like Underwood herself—pretty and slender. *Idol* producer Nigel Lythgoe, an Englishman who was 18 when *Sgt. Pepper* came out, appears crestfallen.

"I HAVE MAJOR TRUST ISSUES."

REBA McENTIRE AND KELLY, LIVE 2007: "I'M A LITTLE BIT COUNTRY ..."

To his credit, season-five victor Taylor Hicks knows all the words to "A Day in the Life," which is good news for Lythgoe and his patient crew, but bad news for the millions who will watch him massacre the song on Wednesday. When Hicks, in full middle-manager-at-karaoke-night mode, mimes holding a gun to his temple as he sings, "he blew his mind out in a car," you can't help but wish his finger were loaded.

Then there's Kelly Clarkson. The inaugural *Idol* valedictorian and still its most famous alum, the 25-year-old is kicking off the medley with the album's title track. Dressed in black Lucky Brand jeans, silver Chuck Taylors and a nondescript black V-neck tee, and of ordinary size and build, Clarkson looks less like a pop star than anyone else onstage—or off. Standing alongside guest guitarist Joe Perry of Aerosmith, who even for this run-through is draped in flowing white scarves, she could be the girl from craft services bringing Mr. Perry his tea, rather than a 15-million-selling singer who's about to release the year's most polarizing album.

"I want to do this song kinda bluesy, you know?" she'd said earlier. "Like the Hendrix version," referring to the guitarist's snarling live take on "Sgt. Pepper." It's an obscure, muso reference (truth be told, *Blender* had to Google it), and not what you'd expect from the onetime costar of *From Justin to Kelly*. But when the house band and the Aerosmith guitarist strike up the song's famous opening salvo, and Clarkson nonchalantly bounces her hand off her thigh and begins singing "It was 20 years ago today," any confusion about her stature vanishes.

The Texas native has one of the great voices in pop music, a powerful and versatile instrument that's steeped in the rhythm & blues and country music she grew up with in the South. If Mariah Carey's five-octave voice is the equivalent of an expensively bred poodle, then Clarkson's is a bloodhound: friendly, earthy, but fierce just the same. She blasts out "Sgt. Pepper" with startling confidence, unfazed by the song choice, the guitar god to her left, her fellow champs waiting their turn or the dozen 2007 *Idol* finalists watching, slack-jawed, from their seats. After she nails a goose-pimply gospel run in the chorus, she mock-introduces Taylor Hicks, and the stage manager signals cut. The hundred or so showbizzers in attendance—the house band, Fox execs, gaffers, entourages, Sanjaya's hot sister—spontaneously roar and whistle their approval. Clarkson smiles sweetly, finds her mark and runs >>

STYLING: LAURY SMITH FOR MARGARET MALDONADO; HAIR: FRANKIE PAYNE FOR LUXE; MAKEUP: ASHLEY DONOVAN. BLACK BUSTIER: DOLCE & GABBANA; NECKLACE: ROYAL ORDER; RING: LOREE RODKIN. THIS PAGE: RUSTY RUSSELL/GETTY IMAGES.

KELLY CLARKSON IS A PICKY EATER.

through it once again. This time, everyone whoops even louder.

After 90 minutes of hearing the Beatles alternately honored and defaced, Nigel Lythgoe figures that the tribute is about as good as it's ever going to get, and sends the *Idol* grads home for the evening. Clarkson is far too polite and low-maintenance to have caused any fuss while the rehearsals dragged on, but she has little time to waste these days. Her new album, *My December*, written nearly exclusively by Clarkson to the consternation of her record company, has finally been granted a release date, after a hostile and unusually public battle between her celebrated record-company boss, Clive Davis, and her high-profile manager, Jeff Kwatinetz—and several months of prerelease promotion are being squeezed into one. Clarkson, though, is a confirmed chatterbox—"I moved so many times growing up, I got good at talking to anyone"—and before leaving, she stops to gab with Underwood ("She looks like Miss Oklahoma," Kelly says without rancor). Hugs exchanged, she finally heads down to the dressing-room area. Five years ago, in this same concert hall, Clarkson sang the dickens out of the heroically sappy "A Moment Like This" and began her ascent from Burleson, Texas, cocktail waitress to Grammy winner. "When I was onstage just now, all these feelings were coming back," she says. "I remembered being onstage that night and saying to myself, 'I don't want to put out a CD right away, I want to make sure I love everything I do, I don't want to sell out. Now that people voted for me, I'm going to have this opportunity.' I kept thinking to myself, *Just don't blow it*."

IN ESSENCE,

that's what music-industry insiders and fans alike are now wondering: Has Kelly Clarkson blown it? Has she taken the enormous goodwill and affection she earned through her *American Idol* triumph and her two albums, *Thankful* and the smash hit *Breakaway*, and traded it all in to follow her muse? *My December* marks some important changes for Clarkson, ones that can be seen as either integral to her inalienable right to self-expression and creative control (Team Kelly), or as youthful vanity, overconfidence and perhaps even ingratitude (Team Clive).

Ever since *Idol*, Clarkson has, for the most part, been singing other people's songs, which, in the realm of pop music, is typically how business is done. Frank Sinatra sang other people's songs (Paul Anka wrote "My Way"). Elvis sang other people's songs. So did the stars of Motown. Barry Manilow didn't write "I Write the Songs." Whitney Houston made millions (and made Clive Davis millions) by singing songs written by professional songwriters. A Swede in his 30s wrote Britney's "... Baby One More Time." The list is endless, the formula successful: an assembly-line approach to making music that values the end product—the song—over all else.

When *American Idol* came along, most music-industry executives were openly dismissive about the program's prospects for launching memorable recording careers. They found it depressing, if not appalling—the antithesis of the rock tradition of artists writing and performing >>

ANALYZE THIS!

Kelly Clarkson's new album is brimming with bitterness and pain. But what do her lyrics really say about her—and the kind of girlfriend she'll make in the future? We asked **DR. MICHELLE R. CALLAHAN**, relationship expert for *The Tyra Banks Show*, for her take

"HAUNTED"

LYRIC: *Louder, louder/The voices in my head/Whispers taunting/All the things you said/Faster the days go by and I'm still/Stuck in this moment of wanting you here.*

ANALYSIS: The "voices in my head" bit sounds alarming, but Clarkson's not unhinged—just dealing with loss like a normal person, according to our relationship expert. "Kelly's not like many celebrities, who, when they break up with someone, go to the club the very same day and act like they don't care," Dr. Michelle says. "She's willing to say, 'I'm so *not* over it.' She's a real, regular person. I do think an average guy might have a chance with her."

"NEVER AGAIN"

LYRIC: *I hope the ring you gave to her turns her finger green/I hope when you're in bed with her, you think of me/I would never wish bad things, but I don't wish you well.*

ANALYSIS: Despite her claim that she "would never wish bad things," Kelly sounds in a mighty vengeful mood here. Still, according to Dr. Michelle, it's not like the *Idol* alum is going to go Glenn Close, bunny-boiling mad. "Her ex has asked a different woman to marry him—that's about as deep as you can cut, so it's not unusual to be this angry," she says. "Years from now she may regret having exposed her feelings, but right now it's probably helping her."

"CAN I HAVE A KISS"

LYRIC: *I know why you left/I can't blame you myself/Must be hard living with ghosts and such an empty shell/I tried to warn you/I've been a mess since you've known me.*

ANALYSIS: Clarkson's got more baggage than LAX—and she knows it. Dr. Michelle advises that the singer get into therapy to work on her issues and wait six months to a year before reentering the dating world. "The next person she gets together with is going to have to be patient," she says. "If you're a guy who wants a really passionate, loving girlfriend, she sounds like the girl. But I wouldn't go for it now." *Mark Yarm*

FROM LEFT: ALBERT FERREIRA/REUTERS/CORBIS; COURTESY OF DR. MICHELLE R. CALLAHAN.

CONSIDER YOURSELF
WARNED.

NEW TAG ANTI-PERSPIRANT
TESTED UNDER THE HOTTEST CONDITIONS

WARNING: PRODUCT'S SCENT MAY TURN ALREADY HOT HOTTIES HOTTER THAN A HABANERO.
THE USE OF OVEN MITTS IS RECOMMENDED BEFORE HANDLING OF ANY TAMALES.

AFTER HOURS
TAG
ANTI-PERSPIRANT
INVISIBLE SOLID

THE SIMON SLAYER: ON *AMERICAN IDOL* IN 2002.

their own songs based on their own experiences. But 74-year-old BMG Chairman/CEO Clive Davis, whose early love was Broadway show tunes and whose illustrious resume as a hitmaker is dominated by artists working in the division-of-labor system of pop, rather than the less dependable singer-songwriter model of rock, found his dream partner in *Idol*: a fleet of talented, virtuous and pliable singers already adored by millions, whose records he could fill with precision-engineered hits from his Rolodex of chart-topping songwriters.

And so it went for Davis, his record company and the *American Idol* juggernaut. Sales on Clarkson's spirited-but-soggy first record, penned by a boardroom of top writing talent (with a smattering of help from Clarkson): 2.6 million. Clay Aiken's: 2.8 million. Ruben Studdard's: 1.8 million. Soon came Clarkson's 2004 *Breakaway*, a tremendous success that sold 12 million copies worldwide and spawned four No. 1 hits, including the irrepressible breakup anthem "Since U Been Gone" (written by the aforementioned Swede), which earned Clarkson newfound fandom from the decidedly non-*Idol*-watching likes of indie-punk singer Ted Leo and Foo Fighter Dave Grohl, among many rock connoisseurs. More important to Davis, *Breakaway* earned BMG approximately $100 million in revenue, a hefty sum in any era, but especially vital for a record company reeling from freefalling CD sales.

Clarkson is quick to point out that she wrote a good deal of *Breakaway*, and she's right to be proud of her contributions: She shares songwriting credits on six of *Breakaway*'s 12 songs, including the *TRL* staples "Behind These Hazel Eyes" and "Walk Away," the stalker-y hard-rock tune "Addicted" and the stirring power ballad "Because of You," a raw tale of post- >>

RESPECT MY AUTHORITY!

ARTISTES VS THE MAN

Kelly Clarkson isn't the first artist to war with the suits. *Blender* recounts three legendary creative-control rumbles

VS

THE ARTIST
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
18th-century Austrian composer

THE SUIT
HIERONYMUS GRAF VON COLLOREDO
Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg

THE SHOWDOWN

At 13, Mozart was named Salzburg's Konzertmeister by family friend and patron Archbishop Sigismund von Schrattenbach. When Schrattenbach died, though, he was succeeded by Colloredo, who took an immediate dislike to Mozart's style, forcing him to eat with servants and forbidding him to perform in the homes of the aristocracy.

THE OUTCOME

Mozart goes to work in the court of Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II—upgrade!

VS

THE ARTIST
DIEGO RIVERA
Famed Mexican muralist

THE SUIT
JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER JR.
Billionaire philanthropist and oil heir

THE SHOWDOWN

In 1932, Rockefeller commissioned Rivera to complete a 63-foot-long mural in the Rockefeller Center lobby in New York. But when Rivera refused to remove Vladimir Lenin's visage from the painting, he was paid his full fee and banned from the site. Despite plans to move it to the Museum of Modern Art, the mural was demolished.

THE OUTCOME

Rivera never paints in the U.S. again, but does re-create his mural—adding Rockefeller's face this time—in Mexico City.

VS

THE ARTIST
TERRY GILLIAM
Monty Python *animator turned film director*

THE SUIT
SID SHEINBERG
President, MCA/Universal Studios

THE SHOWDOWN

After Gilliam spent an estimated $15 million on the dystopian nightmare *Brazil*, Sheinberg, citing the film's bleak ending and poor testing, ordered a recut without Gilliam's participation. Gilliam took out a full-page ad in *Variety* to protest the new edit and set up secret screenings of his version. A compromise third edit was released in 1985.

THE OUTCOME

Uncontrollably brilliant, infinitely churlish, or both, Gilliam has yet to make a movie where something like this doesn't happen. *Jonah Weiner*

CLARKSON: KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES/FOX; MOZART: BETTMANN/CORBIS; COLLOREDO: IMAGNO/GETTY IMAGES; RIVERA: BETTMANN/CORBIS; ROCKEFELLER JR.: HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES; GILLIAM: MICHAEL BUCKNER/GETTY IMAGES; SHEINBERG: JIM SMEAL/WIREIMAGE.

BED HEAD®
TIGI
your hair. your way
Photography: Bed Head Studio
Photographers: Anthony Mascolo & Roberto Aguilar
Make up: Pat Mascolo Hair: Nick Irwin Stylists: Jiv D.
BED HEAD
TIGI
MASTERPIECE
Hook-Up
Mousse Wax
BED HEAD
TIGI
AFTER-PARTY
TIGI SOLD ONLY IN PROFESSIONAL SALONS.
800.259.8586
OR VISIT: WWW.TIGIHAIRCARE.COM

divorce finger-pointing Clarkson wrote to help her sort through the psychological aftermath of her parents' breakup.

"You know, Clive *hated* 'Walk Away' and 'Because of You,'" Clarkson tells *Blender* between nibbles of salmon. It's mid-evening now, and we're seated in an outdoor bungalow at a chic Hollywood hotel (our choice, not Kelly's: "I never go out," she says, believably. "If I'm in L.A., I'm usually at my house playing *Guitar Hero*.") She continues: "Everyone keeps saying how hard this record must be, because of all the crap surrounding it, but that last one was really hard to make. I literally got told to my face that it wouldn't sell more than 600,000 copies. And I got lied to. One reason I don't like working with people at the label is that they lie. They told me, 'We really want you to go to Sweden. These people really want to write with you.' So I flew to Sweden with lyrics I'd written to this track I'd been sent, 'Since U Been Gone.' I get there, and the writers are like, 'Oh, we already have lyrics. We just want you to sing it.' It was really awkward. It was *mean*. That's why there's no relationship with them. Because I don't like to be lied to."

Clarkson began writing *My December* while on tour promoting *Breakaway*. She'd been through at least one bad relationship bust-up—with former Evanescence keyboardist David Hodges, co-writer of "Because of You" and "Addicted"—and talks candidly, if not specifically, about a former boyfriend who "got engaged the day we broke up" (she claims he'd been seeing the other woman the whole time). "Never Again," the album's vengeful first single, featuring the opening lyric "I hope the ring you gave to her turns her finger green," rages against her own stupidity, she says, more than against her cheating ex.

"I didn't even really like the guy," she says. "I'm more mad at myself for being so blind. Why would I pick someone like him to date? What's wrong with me?" We ask Clarkson about her relationship experience. *How many boys total have you made out with?* She rolls her eyes and laughs. "Four? No, wait. Oh, my God, five!" We remark that five isn't very many for an adorable celebrity like herself. "I have major trust issues," she says, laughing. "I just don't make out with people. That's a waste of my kisses and time. And it's so personal: It's, like, my *face*. Plus, I'm afraid of mouth herpes." As for the "Never Again" dude who kicked her ass, if not broke her heart, Clarkson is sanguine. "It's fine in the end. Maybe I had to go through that and learn more about myself. Maybe that's why I don't date much, either," she says, shrugging.

HIDE THE KNIVES: CLARKSON AND DAVIS IN 2004.

"WHEN YOU'RE SENDING ME LINDSAY LOHAN COVERS TO SING, WHY WOULD YOU THINK I WANT YOUR OPINION?"

"Never Again" is just one chapter in *My December*'s memoir of self-doubt, betrayal, anger and spiritual despair. The lyric sheet would make Trent Reznor blush, and it's reasonable to assume that many of the moms and daughters who welcomed Kelly into their SUVs will be flummoxed by the following: "There's a hole ... Slowly killing me"; "I've given up on faith/On everything"; and, in the brutal, are-you-there-God-it's-me-Kelly plaint "Irvine": "Why is it so hard?/Why can't you just take me?/I don't have much to go/Before I fade completely." Not all the material is so pitch-black, and Clarkson's musical instincts are instinctively mainstream: hook-filled big-box rock that comfortably shares shelf space with Avril Lavigne and Evanescence. She nails all those fancy, triple-salchow vocal runs that *Idol*ers are so fond of, but maintains a looseness and warmth that makes her plain likable, more like a favorite waitress than a Gulfstream diva. Still, there's no confusing "Shocked, broken/I'm dying inside" with "I'm *so* movin' on, YEAH YEAH!"

"When I met Kelly, she said, 'I've got one chance in my life to express myself and make the record I want to make,'" says David Kahne, a pop-rock veteran who produced *My December* and has helmed records by Paul McCartney, Tony Bennett and Regina Spektor. "After a couple of weeks in the studio, I knew that it was a matter of life and death for her. I just wondered whether or not she would have the strength to weather what was gonna come her way."

He'd soon find out. In late February, Kelly's manager, Jeff Kwatinetz, CEO of big-deal management company The Firm, played songs from *My December* to Clive Davis. In late March, at a meeting in Los Angeles, Davis played the record for 20 or so key label executives, who confirmed Davis's assessment: The tracks, written by Clarkson, with help from her touring band, were not on a commercial par with the hired-gun hits from *Breakaway*, and Top 40 radio, central to Clarkson's popularity, would reject her new, darker, more personal material. (So far, the suits are correct: "Never Again" was only a marginal radio hit.)

Naturally, Clarkson's manager disagreed. "It's an amazing record from beginning to end," says the shaggy-haired 42-year-old Kwatinetz, whose clients have ranged from Korn to Jennifer Lopez to Snoop Dogg. His Beverly Hills–based company also reps top-billing actors such as Leonardo DiCaprio and Cameron Diaz, and he's widely considered one of the premier talent managers in the business. "I see Kelly as a songwriter who's going to have a 30-year career," says Kwatinetz. "If the record doesn't do what the last album does, if it doesn't sell 5.7 million in the U.S. and have four No. 1 hits, then it's a failure? No. It's ridiculous that she's burdened with these expectations. This record is already a success because she's pushed herself, she's evolved and she's grown. And I hope she keeps doing that."

Davis, however, didn't share Kwatinetz's fervor for Clarkson's artistic growth. He and his label wanted hits, pure and simple. Davis would cite other top artists of his—Avril Lavigne, Christina Aguilera, Pink, Justin Timberlake—who too wrote their own songs but knew well enough to at least collaborate with outside songwriters for their commercial singles. At one point, Davis sent Clarkson three compositions he wanted her to consider recording. One of those songs, "Black Hole," was written by Kara Dioguardi, who contribut- >>

J. CORTES/ZUMA PRESS.

william tell

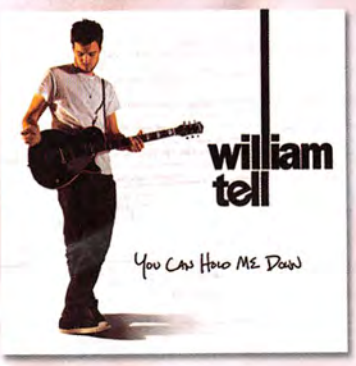
You Can Hold Me Down

The solo debut from the former guitarist of Something Corporate!

Featuring "Fairfax (You're Still The Same)," "Slipping Under (Sing Along To Your Favorite Song)," and "Just For You."

AVAILABLE NOW!

www.williamtell.com
www.myspace.com/williamtell



Available At

BEST BUY

NewDoor Records UMe
A UNIVERSAL MUSIC COMPANY

© 2007 Universal Music Enterprises, a Division of UMG Recordings, Inc.

ABSOLUTE GARBAGE

THE FIRST-EVER COLLECTION OF ALL THE BAND'S HITS

FEATURES THE BRAND NEW TRACK, "TELL ME WHERE IT HURTS"

DVD PRESENTS THE BAND'S MUSIC VIDEOS, ON DVD FOR THE FIRST TIME, PLUS AN HOUR OF CAREER-SPANNING BONUS FOOTAGE

SPECIAL LIMITED EDITION INCLUDES BONUS CD
WITH 13 REMIXES BY SOME OF THE BIGGEST DJS IN THE WORLD

LIMITED SPECIAL EDITION CD DVD

TO GET GARBAGE RINGTONES FOR YOUR PHONE, TEXT:
GARB5A to 30303 to get BLEED LIKE ME
GARB5B to 30303 to get CHERRY LIPS (GO BABY GO)
GARB5C to 30303 to get SHUT YOUR MOUTH

Not available compatible on all carriers or handsets. Internet-enabled wireless phones are required to download ringtones.
UMG will not give refunds for downloads to incompatible phones or carriers. All charges are one time fees with no subscriptions obligation.
Charges will be billed on your wireless phone bill or deducted from your prepaid balance. Standard messaging rates, additional fees, terms and conditions apply.

WWW.GARBAGE.COM WWW.MYSPACE.COM/GARBAGE

PARENTAL ADVISORY EXPLICIT CONTENT

ALMO SOUNDS GEFFEN UMe DVD VIDEO
A UNIVERSAL MUSIC COMPANY

© 2007 Universal Music Enterprises, a Division of UMG Recordings, Inc.

To learn more about parental advisory programs, go to www.parentalguide.org

AVAILABLE AT

BEST BUY

ed to *Breakaway*. Clarkson says no one at the label told her that the song had already been released, in 2005, by actress Lindsay Lohan. "I'm all for opinions and advice," Clarkson says. "I'm young, I'm a rookie—I get that. But when you're sending me Lindsay Lohan covers to sing, why would you think I'd want your opinion?"

Heels dug in deeper. RCA refused to authorize a release date. Screaming matches between Kwatinetz and RCA execs were daily occurrences. The relationship flat-

FROM TOP: KELLY AND MOM, JEANNE; RIDING THE RANGE AS A TEXAS TWEEN; STYLING IN HER 11TH-GRADE YEARBOOK.

lined in late April, when Davis, at a Sony BMG worldwide conference in Las Vegas, hurriedly presented four songs from *My December* to the gathering of international department heads, complete with overhead projection of the lyrics, an unusual tactic that some felt was meant to show up Clarkson and Kwatinetz and serve as a chance for the ego-driven Davis to effectively wash his hands of the project. (The label says Davis was only trying to gather feedback for what would be a challenging record to market). Word of trouble between the camps leaked to the press.

Soon thereafter, Clarkson and Davis sat down for a face-to-face meeting at the Beverly Hills Hotel. "It was nice," Clarkson says. "It was just the two of us, and his dog. I was like, *I don't know you very well, and I am not a bullshitter. I get you don't like the album. You're 80; you're not supposed to like my album.* I said, 'Clive, I'm going to make tons of albums. It doesn't have to be mainstream every time.' Then he kept bringing up people he's worked with. 'You're a Whitney! You're a Mariah!' 'First of all, Mariah writes a lot of her stuff. Secondly, I don't want a career like either one of those singers. That's why it's hard for us to make an album: You don't know me! You don't know what I like, and you don't know what my fans like.'"

Davis eventually relented, releasing the record exactly as Clarkson conceived it. The label says that it's spent $2.5 million on promoting and marketing *My December* prior to the June 26 on-sale date, and Clarkson remains a "top global priority" for Sony BMG. In their view, though, Clarkson is the type of artist beholden to Top 40 radio airplay, and without hit singles, listeners will simply turn their attention to a different artist with a catchier song. Clarkson counters that the album "is full of singles, but not 'Since U Been Gone' singles. I don't want to make a whole career out of that. I'd get bored." When asked about the pressure of trying to match the something-for-everyone appeal of *Breakaway*, Clarkson doesn't blink. "I can't stand it when people put out the same record over and over again. It's annoying. If you're going with the flow and not fighting, that's settling. I can't take that. Life is just too short to be a pushover."

(This independent streak would take an unexpected turn in mid-June, when Clarkson fired manager Jeff Kwatinetz. She also pulled the plug on her summer arena tour, which had been plagued by poor ticket sales; Kwatinetz was its principal architect.)

One top R&B/pop songwriter and producer believes that the conflict is actually less about this particular record, and more about the diminishing power of the traditional major record company. "They're in a fear-based marketplace, with fearful executives making scared decisions," he says. "Of course the label has a right to say that they should be part of the process. But where the arrogance comes in is when they say to the small-town American sweetheart, 'You're an idiot.' They scolded her like she was their little shorty. So now you have consumers who don't trust the labels anyway, and you have America's sweetheart crying. That's not where you want to be."

"I JUST DON'T MAKE OUT WITH PEOPLE."

TWO WEEKS

later, Kelly Clarkson is in Nashville, standing onstage in front of 50,000 Bud-Light-chugging, NASCAR-loving country-music fans. Which, somewhat surprisingly, is exactly where she wants to be. It's the opening night of the 2007 CMA Music Festival, better known as Fan Fair, and Clarkson has flown in to sing a pair of duets with one of *her* idols, Reba McEntire. "Dude, she is the ultimate storyteller," Clarkson says, her drawl thickened since we spoke in L.A. "No matter what she sings, I always end up crying."

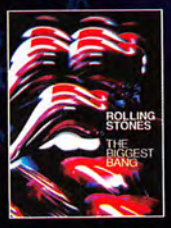
Clarkson's own hardscrabble upbringing would make for a pretty good country song. She grew up poor—"like, no-food poor"—and her parents' divorce when she was 6 broke up her family to an extreme degree: Her brother stayed in California with their dad, her sister moved in with an aunt in North Carolina, and Kelly moved back to Texas with her mom, who later remarried (she's close to her stepdad, distant from her bio dad). When she's not on the road, Clarkson spends most of her time in a plantation-style house she built outside Fort Worth, replete with a go-kart track, antique Texas furniture and "a big ol' American flag hanging in my garage." She believes devoutly in Jesus—"I frickin' love him! He's done a lot of cool things for me," she says humbly—and refers to Hollywood as "Halloween."

It's easy to foresee Clarkson someday winding up in Nashville, far removed from the penthouse power plays that have dogged *My December*. "Nashville's like a little L.A. music town, but there's no drama," she says. She's already working on her next record, which she describes as "country-blues," citing Patty Griffin, Ryan Adams and "Dead Flowers"-era Stones as reference points. *Blender* can only wonder how Clive Davis will react to *that*. Clarkson, with all due respect, doesn't much care. "I'm in my 20s. I'm a different person every day," she says. "I just want to make sure everything I do is something I'm proud of. I have to do that. There's not another option." [BLENDER]

FROM TOP: COURTESY OF KELLY CLARKSON (2); CLASSMATES MEDIA INC.

BEST BUY

Start it up with the Rolling Stones



Introducing *The Biggest Bang* 4-DVD set, only at Best Buy™. Crank up over seven hours of video filmed around the world, including more than 55 live songs, behind-the-scenes footage and more. You won't want it to ever stop.

© 2007 Best Buy. All Rights Reserved. Best Buy, the Best Buy logo and the tag design are trademarks of Best Buy Enterprise Services, Inc.

32543

AGAINST ME!

ARE AMERICA'S ANGRIEST PUNKS. BUT WILL THEIR BOMB-HURLING IDEALS SHAKE THE MAINSTREAM—OR FALL VICTIM TO IT?

By JON DOLAN
Photographs by KENNETH CAPPELLO

RAGE INSIDE THE MACHINE

TOM GABEL HAS a problem with selling out. He's addicted to it. When his leftist punk band Against Me! graduated from playing anarchist squats to real rock clubs, he was a total sellout. When they left a tiny record label because it didn't have $3,000 to buy a tour van: sellout! Charging more than eight dollars for a show? Getting on MTV? Professionally recording their CDs? S-E-L-L-O-U-T.

And tonight they're moving in on their biggest deal yet. The Gainesville, Florida, foursome is in New York to play a show at the 3,500-capacity Roseland Ballroom. On the dance floor, fans mosh, crowd-surf and flex their necks to Gabel's searing punk screeds, which he delivers like Sgt. Slaughter declaiming Noam Chomsky. The crowd hollers back every line. They even seem to know the songs from the band's major-label debut, *New Wave*, which won't be out for two months. With this many people downloading lyrics like "Protest songs/In response to military aggression/Protest songs, try to stop the soldiers' guns," Dick Cheney better add a "P2P Wing" at Gitmo.

Upstairs in the VIP mezzanine, record-company people hold multiple conversations while BlackBerrying. Max Weinberg, who like his boss, The Boss, is an avid Against Me! partisan, gets introduced to one of tonight's headliners, Mastodon. Past the security guard and down a hall, some spoons get introduced to some noses. It's pretty standard music-biz glad-handing. But for Gabel, who got his start a decade ago playing "folk punk" in a Gainesville laundromat, the big rooms and endless expense accounts still exude a weird, belly-of-the-beast stank—and also, if he keeps his wits about him, some unique opportunities for sticking it to the man.

"One of the labels we talked to before we signed with Sire took us to a strip club," says >>

Against Me! (from top): Warren Oakes, Andrew Seward, James Bowman and Tom Gabel.

Gabel, whose slight frame and pinched speaking voice contrast with his drill-instructor singing. "Whenever Warren, our drummer, got a lap dance, he'd turn to the person from the label and say, 'money ... money ... more money.' Eventually she said, 'I've given you $500! I don't have any more money!'" Take that, capitalism!

Such rainmaking excess might seem unbecoming of a band whose last album, 2005's *Searching for a Former Clarity*, had a song about the music business called "Unprotected Sex With Multiple Partners." But this is the strange place Against Me! find themselves. They're the anticorporate band big corporations can't stop throwing money at. "I made a list in my BlackBerry of industry terms," Gabel says. "My favorite is *sensitive*—we'll be 'sensitive' to your needs. That means 'We're gonna manipulate you *subtly*.'"

The following afternoon, the band is in Philadelphia. They play roughly 200 shows a year, so a late-night evac after a party isn't a big thing. Onstage, they're black-clad brick chuckers. Offstage, they're regular guys in their late 20s, with long-term relationships and discerning taste in tats. Bassist Andrew Seward has Boba Fett on his arm. Guitarist-vocalist James Bowman sports a Springsteen album cover. Drummer Warren Oakes's back features two illustrations that appeared alongside stories by his favorite writer, William Saroyan, a chronicler of the immigrant experience of the 1930s.

Gabel's left ankle has the logo of original U.K. anarcho-punks Crass, but he isn't one to wear his angst on his sleeve. His aggro side seems to simmer under a placid surface. Rather than cough up red-meat invective, he's more likely to analyze the failure of the anti-globalization movement. "We're in a really apathetic moment," he says, fondly recalling the late '90s, when mass protests in Seattle and Genoa, Italy, promised an international putsch against capitalist hegemony.

"You can get Really Polite Tom," Oakes says. "But once he knows you, he can get pretty real."

"I remember one time toward the end of school," adds Seward, a friend of Gabel's since they were teenagers. "Tom had taken acid or some shit and someone wanted to kick his ass, so he picked up a paint can and swung it at 'em."

It's a little early to sound check, so the band scuttles into a backstage hangout area where huge black-leather couches, thick, drawn blinds and indie-rock posters suggest a college lounge decorated by Fredo Corleone. The dumpy accommodations are positively palatial compared to some of the places they endured on the come up. "In Warsaw we played a squat in this five-story building," Gabel recalls, slouching into his sofa. "On the roof, they had boxes full of rotten eggs and glass bottles. When we asked why, they said they needed them to fight off the junkies who would try to take over the building."

"At the house we played in Danzig, they fed us carrot gruel," Oakes adds.

One would think any band that's logged two uniquely depressing stories about playing gross Polish squats would be awarded a lifetime supply of unimpeachable "cred" among punk stalwarts. No such luck. In fact, they're just as alienated from the underground as from the mainstream.

The band's late-'90s origins in the hardcore scene and their adamant antiestablishment politics won them an extremely dedicated—and extremely extreme—following. You can YouTube them playing 2002's "Baby, I'm an Anarchist!" and watch a sea of sweaty kids scream along to a ballad about dumping your girl because she wouldn't smash a Starbucks window during a protest. Those diehards were decidedly un-psyched when the band left aesthetically pure, do-it-yourself label No Idea Records by 2003 to release their critical breakthrough, *As the Eternal Cowboy*, on the leading syndicate of Warped Tour neo-punk, Fat Wreck Chords.

"We faced every kind of confrontation you can imagine," Gabel says. Disgruntled fans slashed the tires of their tour van in one town and graffitied it in another (scrawling "remember when you mattered" but misspelling "Against"). At a concert in Texas a protest band called Against Us! played in the parking lot outside the club. A writer for *Maximum RocknRoll*, the granddaddy of DIY zines, went so far as to issue a fatwa against the band, listing tips readers might find handy for disrupting Against Me! shows (like pouring bleach on their T-shirt table). "He came to a show and let off a stink bomb," Seward says. "We were like, 'Well, this smells,' and kept on playing."

Even in a notoriously balkanized subculture, this kind of abuse was over the top. "They remind people of punk from the '70s and '80s," says Jared Kaufman, an editor at the popular discussion forum Absolutepunk.net. "Because Against Me! has a such a strong message, the reaction was especially intense."

Indeed, Gabel recalls master theorists of old-school thrash like the Minutemen's D. Boon and Bad Religion's Greg Graffin, guys as famous for the endless enjambment in their lyrics as for the seriousness of their convictions. When the band played *Late Night With Conan O'Brien* in 2005, they introduced themselves to America with

DE-FENSE DE-FENSE

On "White People for Peace," Against Me! rant about the futility of singing "protest songs/In response to military aggression." Here, we see how five more responses stack up. Are you listening, Condoleezza?

PROTEST SONGS

Deployed by well-meaning peaceniks in the 1960s ("The Times They Are A-Changin'"), 1860s ("When Johnny Comes Marching Home") and 1760s ("Revolutionary Tea"), thereby averting Vietnam, the Civil War and the American Revolution. Oh ... wait ...

EFFECTIVENESS: ✊

NONVIOLENCE

Inspired by the teachings of the world's major religions, it's peaceful civil resistance as practiced by **GANDHI** and MLK. Successful in the long run, but less so for those guys—they were both assassinated.

EFFECTIVENESS: ✊✊✊

ECONOMIC SANCTIONS

See: the U.S. embargoes of Cuba, Iraq, Sudan et al. Painless and politically popular, but with the pesky side effect of killing innocent civilians.

EFFECTIVENESS: ✊✊

DIPLOMACY

Make treaties—not war. Worked great with the Russians; with Hitler, not so much.

EFFECTIVENESS: ✊✊✊✊

MILITARY ESCALATION

Could include anything from a U.N. peacekeeping force (cool blue helmets!) to all-out war. Just watch out for those insurgents ...

EFFECTIVENESS: ✊✊✊

SURRENDER

Hey, it always works for France.

EFFECTIVENESS: ✊✊

GANDHI: AP PHOTO.

Rebel yell (clockwise from top left): The band takes a break from assaulting neo-imperialist hegemony; Gabel tries to think of a rhyme for *Wolfowitz*; Gabel shows off the world's punkest uvula.

"Don't Lose Touch," a weirdly catchy position paper on the unholy marriage of art and commerce set to a militant disco groove. For *Jimmy Kimmel Live*, they went with "From Her Lips to God's Ears (the Energizer)," in which Gabel scathingly, but also empathetically, gets inside the mind of Condoleezza Rice. He shouts, "The president's giving a speech in Georgia to remember the voice of a slain civil-rights leader ... Oh Condoleezza, do you get the fucking joke?"

Such righteous indignation has roots in a youth fighting for social causes in the ultra-conservative Naples, Florida, which boasts more millionaires per capita than any other community in the country. Gabel originally embraced punk fashion as a shield against junior-high bullies. ("It didn't really work out so well. I got picked on more.") The stakes escalated at age 15, when a run-in with some of Naples' finest during a Fourth of July celebration led to a beat-down and a summer of house arrest.

Soon he was corresponding with Black Panthers cofounder Bobby Seale and getting involved in organizations like Food Not Bombs, which distributes vegetarian meals to poor people. "There are a lot of migrant workers in the area," Gabel explains. "As recently as a few years ago there were cases of actual slavery discovered."

All the Against Me! guys had similar educations. Seward joined Gabel in Food Not Bombs. The Alabama-bred Bowman volunteered for Meals on Wheels. Oakes, who hails from Sarasota, used to challenge his high school history teacher's textbook Americanism with quotes from Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*. "She pulled me aside and said, 'Look, what you're saying is true, but you're confusing everyone else.'"

"THEIR CROWD KNOWS EVERY WORD TO EVERY SONG. IT WAS SIMILAR TO THE FEELING I HAD SEEING NIRVANA."
BUTCH VIG

It was only natural that this social responsibility would extend to their band. "When we first started touring, we'd ask for free food in fast-food restaurants," Gabel recalls. "They'd give us burgers, and we'd say, 'We're vegetarian—can we just have the lettuce, tomato and bun?' They always got a laugh out of that."

It's a long haul from the Wendy's Dumpster to the champagne room, a road so rarely traveled Against Me! seem like pioneers. As if to stay a step ahead of the industry machine and their angry ex-fans, they've become both punkier and catchier with each step they've taken up the ladder. Their latest album, *New Wave*, helmed by Nirvana and Smashing Pumpkins producer Butch Vig, is characteristically apoplectic, but its entreaties for a world without war or corruption or lame rock bands aren't just awesomely overwrought, they're heroic. Gabel's mix of radical pamphleteer and emo diarist suggests a kind of Marxist My Chemical Romance.

"Tom fills the songs with a lot of words, and the phrasing can be awkward," Vig says. "It's not 'I love you; let's go get a beer.' But when you see them, the crowd knows every word to every song. It was similar to the feeling I had seeing Nirvana."

If Gabel does have a Cobainian knack for moving the masses, he isn't entirely sure where he'd like them to go. Oakes's ideal government would be "radical democracy," essentially: participation by all the citizens in every civic decision. Gabel held the same beliefs for years; now, he seems less certain. "I can talk about anarchism philosophically, but practically, I'm not sure what it means," he says. Some of that ambivalence is theoretical, some personal. "The people on the punk scene were some of the same people in the activist community," he says. "We were kind of rejected by both." In other words, Against Me! can't go home again. "We keep moving up," Gabel says. "Because we can't go back." [BLENDER]

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: KENNETH CAPPELLO; SETH OLENICK/RETNA; COURTESY OF WARNER BROS. RECORDS.

"I HAVE CRAZY THOUGHTS"

Like any other pretty blond country singer from Texas, **MIRANDA LAMBERT** has a mean temper, a bunch of hit songs and a revolver she's not afraid to use

By ROB TANNENBAUM

Photograph by MATTHIAS CLAMER

According to the songs on your new album, *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*, you're a mouthy, temperamental, vengeful heartbreaker who likes guns, booze and cigarettes. Is that accurate?
I don't smoke, but the rest of it is pretty right on. People are like, "You hate men." No, I just hate anyone who's rude to me.

Why would people think you hate men?
Probably because I write songs about killing them and blowing up their houses. [Laughs.]

So on a scale of 1 to 10, how crazy are you?
A 5.5. I mean, I have crazy thoughts. I can get a little psycho-y. I'm just a get-even person, really. Instead of throwing a temper tantrum, I'd rather do something worse to whoever hurt me.

On your early single "Kerosene," you set a cheating boyfriend on fire. Now you've got "Gunpowder & Lead," where you shoot an abusive boyfriend.
It's a fantasy—I can write whatever I want. To me, country music is about drinkin' and cheatin'. It's about depressing stuff. For a while, country radio was playing only feel-good songs: It was all about "Every day is beautiful," "I'm so blessed." And I'm like, "*What?*" I don't want to hear a song like that on a shitty day. And people driving home from work don't want to hear that either.

When you entered the televised singing competition *Nashville Star* in 2003, what was the state of your career?
I was living with my parents, playing in bars every weekend. I auditioned for *Nashville Star* in Dallas with 250 people, and I didn't make the top 30. I wore a hideous outfit—tight black pants and a sparkly blue shirt—sang a Shania Twain song, and I kind of sucked. My heart wasn't into it. Two weeks later, I went to another audition in Houston, sang "Crazy" and ended up winning.

You made it to the finals of *Nashville Star*. What were you thinking onstage?
Lord, please do not let me win. I don't know if it's on the DVD, but when I was eliminated, I went, "Yes!"

Did you have a classic country-music upbringing? Any moonshiners in the family, or grandmas who picked cotton?
We were pretty poor, part of the time. When I was 5, we couldn't afford a house anymore, so we moved in with my uncle. It was awful. My parents are private investigators, and the phone just stopped ringing. It's not like you can ask people, "Is your husband cheating on you? Because I need work." Even though I'd get my clothes at Goodwill or my mom made them, she made sure I looked as cute as the other girls. I'm spoiled, because I got so much attention from my parents. That's probably my problem now. I want to be hugged; I want to be loved. You wouldn't think that, with my personality and the tattoo on my arm. But I need a lot of attention.

Did your parents' work pick up again?
Yeah, we moved out to the country and renovated a farmhouse. We had rabbits, goats, pigs and a big garden. My mom would go, "Y'all go pick out what you want to eat tonight," so we'd bring in squash and cabbage and she'd make rabbit stir-fry. It was awesome. And because of the rabbits, I learned about sex very early in life.

Are you still a rabbit fan?
I can't wait to start a farm. I love animals. People are like, "You're a contradiction," because I'm also a hunter. I piss people off by talking about this. But every animal I've ever killed, I've used for food. If God didn't want us to eat animals, he wouldn't have made them out of meat.

So there are some animals we feed, and other animals—
That feed us! Exactly. Vegetarians are the healthiest people I know. But how do you smell bacon and not want to eat it? I would rather kill myself.

What's the biggest thing you've ever shot?
A deer. It scored a 145, a really huge eight-pointer.

You used a rifle?
No, a bow and arrow. I started bow-hunting deer last year. My boyfriend [country singer Blake Shelton] bought me a bow.

Did you consider that a romantic gift?
Oh *yeah*, I loved it. That's the best gift a boyfriend has ever given me.

Where did the song title "Gunpowder & Lead" come from?
I was in a concealed-handgun class with my dad, and I asked him, "What exactly is a bullet made out of?" And he was like, "Well, you have gunpowder and lead ... " That was all I needed to know. 'Cause I was thinking, *What are little girls made of?*

Sugar and spice and everything nice?
Bullshit! [Laughs.] Gunpowder and lead.

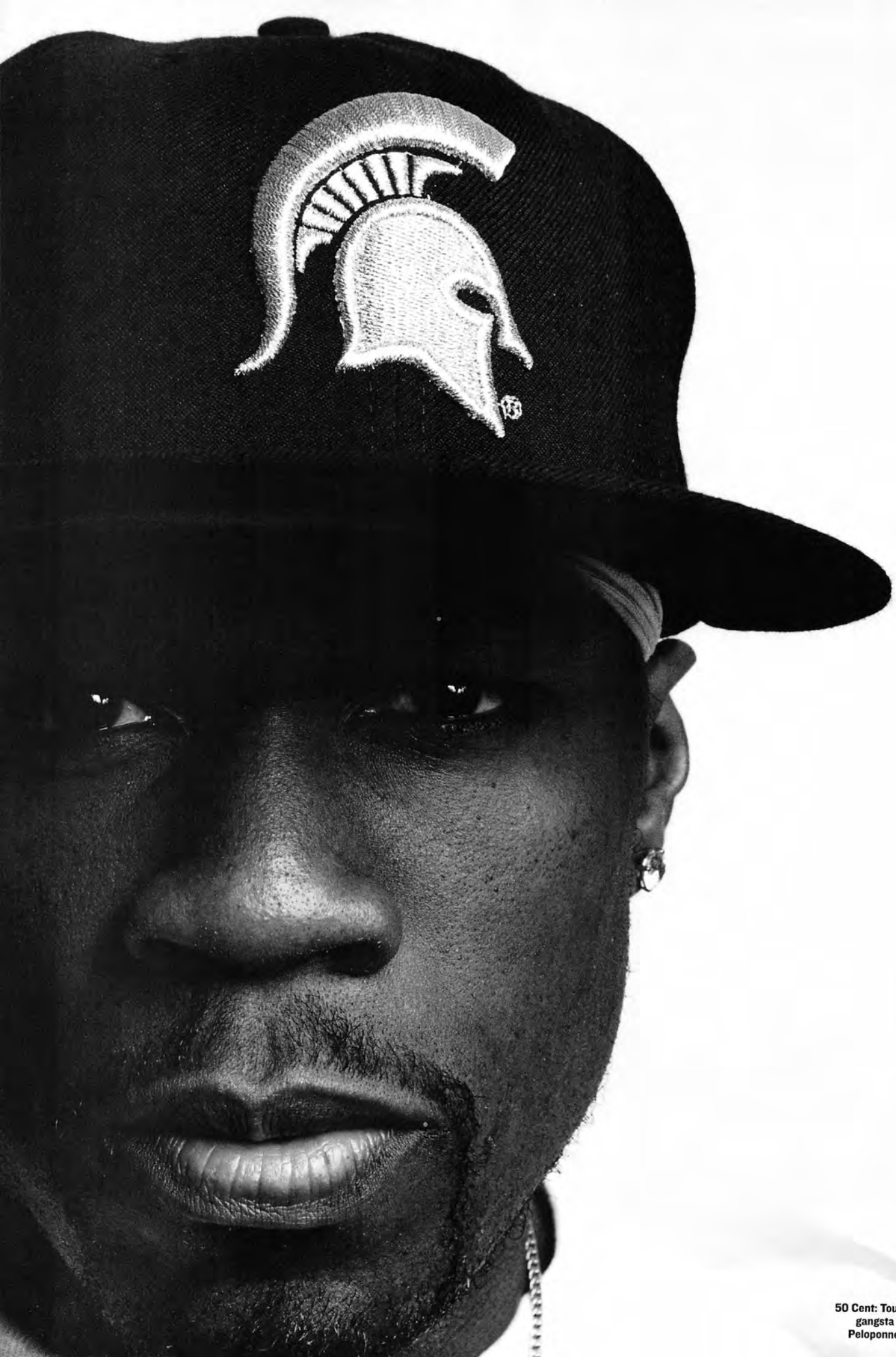
Why do you want to carry a concealed weapon?
I use it for protection. I think a lot less crime would happen if some women who get raped and left for dead in an alley had had a gun on them.

So it's a bad idea to sneak up on you.
Yes. I almost shot a boyfriend once. I literally had the gun in his face. I heard a noise outside my house and saw something flash across the window, so I got my revolver and opened the door like they do on *Cops*. He came around the corner, and I was like, "That was pretty stupid. I would have shot you and then dragged you into my house, so it looked like you were breaking in." [Laughs.]

Do you have a gun on you now?
If it's concealed, I can't tell you. So are you wondering? Good. [BLENDER]

WARDROBE STYLING: CLAUDIA FOWLER; HAIR AND MAKEUP: HOLLY CHAPMAN; PROP STYLING: RUBY GUIDARA.

"If God didn't want us TO EAT ANIMALS, he
wouldn't have made them out of meat."



50 Cent: Toughest gangsta in the Peloponnessus.

33 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ... 50 CENT

HOW DID CURTIS JACKSON GO FROM QUEENS THUG TO ACTRESS-DATING, MANSION-OWNING SUPERSTAR? WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM "WEIRD AL," OF COURSE!

By JONAH WEINER

Photograph by JASON NOCITO

1 • HIS MOTHER DEALT DRUGS TO SUPPORT HIM
Sabrina Jackson gave birth to Curtis on July 6, 1975. She was 15. "She wanted to provide for me, but she didn't see Burger King as an option," 50 says. "She found other means: hustling." His grandmother would mind him for weeks on end. "My mama substituted presents for time: Every time I seen her, it was Christmas."

"RIGHT AFTER I COMMITTED TO MUSIC, I STARVED."

2 • SHE TOLD HIM HE'D BEEN AN IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
"One day I asked her, 'Mama, why don't I have a father?'" he recalls. "She said, 'You was an immaculate conception, like Jesus.' She was just trying to make me feel special."

3 • TO THIS DAY, HE'S NEVER MET HIS DAD
"I don't know who he was, and I have no interest in knowing," he says. "I mean, it's a source of regret. He could have helped me in life. But that period has passed."

4 • BEFORE HE WAS 50 CENT, HE WAS BOO-BOO
"My aunt used to say, 'Come here, Boo-Boo!' and it just stuck." Was it hard to command respect on the streets with a name so cuddly? "It's scarier that way," 50 says. "If someone calls themselves Terminator, you're like, 'Yeah, right!'"

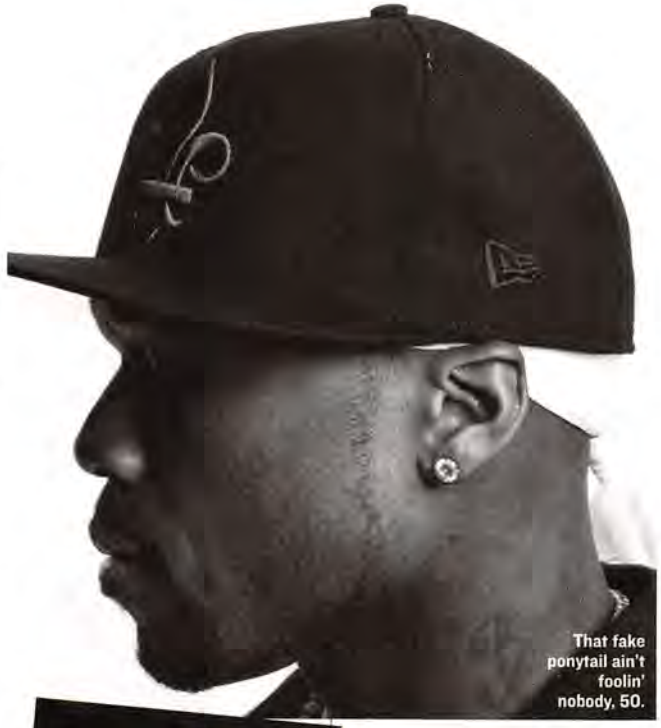
6 • HIS MOM SWUNG BOTH WAYS
50 Cent recalls: "I ain't see males around my mom. My mama liked women. But I would never see anything that would make me think something sexual was going on. It didn't dawn on me till later."

7 • WHEN 50 WAS 8, HIS MOTHER WAS MURDERED
Sabrina kept her own apartment across town. In 1983, someone drugged her and turned on her gas oven, leaving her to die. "When they found her, her body was fucked up," 50 later recalled. Today, he says, "My biggest loss was my mom. Everything that went wrong was wrong because she wasn't there—if I wanted to go to the park and it started raining, it was raining 'cause my mother wasn't there."

8 • HE FOLLOWED IN HER DRUG-DEALING FOOTSTEPS JUST FOUR YEARS LATER
With 50, his grandparents and eight aunts and uncles all under one roof, money was tight. "Hustling was the only option," he explains. "I wasn't thinking about a career. I was looking for instant gratification."

9 • HE SAYS HIS AUNTS AND UNCLES WERE HIS FIRST CUSTOMERS ...
"They'd have parties, and at the time, cocaine was like marijuana—it was common. I'd say, 'Yo, I'll go pick it up for you,' then run to the side of the house where I put it in a little bag. It went from there to me hustling from 3 to 6 P.M. every day. My grandparents thought I was in an after-school program."

10 • ... BUT ONE UNCLE'S ADDICTION ALMOST GOT 50 KILLED
A complaint kept arising—his bags were light. He says he discovered his uncle Star had been dipping into his stash. "If the guys I had been selling light bags to thought I was cheating them on purpose, they would have killed me," he later wrote in his autobiography. He beat his uncle with a giant wooden fork in reprisal. "To this day, Star and I don't speak much."


That fake ponytail ain't foolin' nobody, 50.

50 adjusts his Kevlar jockstrap.

11 • EVEN WITHOUT GIANT UTENSILS, HE PACKED A KILLER RIGHT HOOK
When 50 was 14, an older neighborhood dealer opened up a small boxing gym for local kids. "When I wasn't killing time in school, I was sparring in the gym or selling crack on the strip," 50 recalled. He took what he learned in the ring out onto the streets: "At the slightest infraction, I was punching someone in the face."

12 • HE LOST HIS VIRGINITY AT AGE 12
"It went well—I was 12 and she was 21!" he says, grinning. "I spent a night at my friend's house, and his sister had her friend staying over, too. So I started to touch on her. I was a horny little dog, and I got away with it."

13 • HIS SECRET STASH SPOT? WOMEN'S PANTIES!
One morning, when he was 19, 50 was out hustling with the help of a girlfriend when the cops swooped in. "When they searched her, they found 36 vials of crack and 12 packs of heroin in her underwear," he later recalled.

14 • THE STREETS WERE 50'S BUSINESS SCHOOL. THERE WERE HOSTILE TAKEOVERS ...
At Shock, 50 met a stick-up kid from Brooklyn named Jah. "When we got out, I brought him into my area to rob all the dealers who weren't part of my group. I said, 'You can have all the money, just give me their pieces.'"

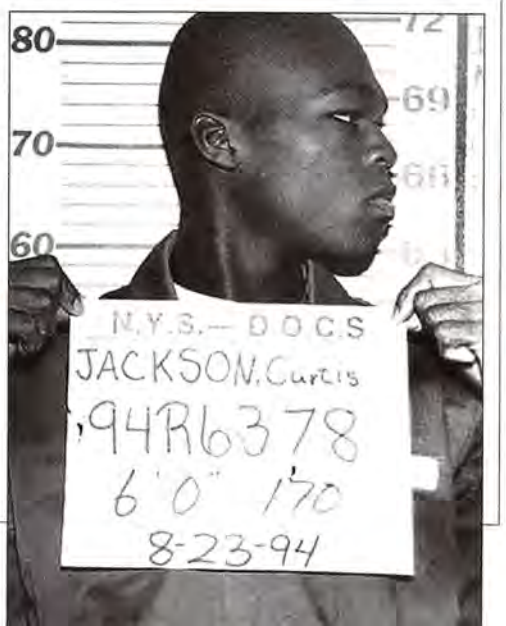
15 • ... SPECIAL PROMOTIONS ...
"I would take the pieces from Jah and give them away free with every purchase. So even if the fiends catch a sale with someone else, they would go, 'Nah, I can get this for free!'"

16 • ... AND MARKET SATURATION
"When there's money to be made, there's no hours, no going home," 50 says. "In the music business, I adapt the same concepts. When it's not 50 Cent's album, it's the G-Unit album. When it's not Young Buck, it's Lloyd Banks. I'm here constantly." >>

5

IN 1994, HE WAS SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR POSSESSION OF 280 GRAMS OF CRACK AND 4 OUNCES OF HEROIN

To avoid hard time, he enrolled in New York's Shock Incarceration program: boot camp for felons. For six months upstate, he awoke at 5:30 A.M., did push-ups on his knuckles and sawed trees.



FROM TOP: JASON NOCITO; WENN; MICHAEL OCHS/GETTY IMAGES. STYLING (TOP AND PREVIOUS PAGE): MIA MADDOX.

OFFICIAL RULES

NO PURCHASE, PAYMENT, SALES PRESENTATION, OR CONTRIBUTION NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. A PURCHASE WILL NOT IMPROVE YOUR CHANCES OF WINNING. Sweepstakes begins 10/15/06. Entry must be received by date specified elsewhere in offer or by prize deadline(s) below, whichever is sooner. Follow all entry instructions published elsewhere in this offer.

DREAM OF A LIFETIME SWEEPSTAKES

Winner(s) of prizes below will be selected from among all eligible entries received in random drawings conducted on or about 8/31/08 by Ventura Associates, Inc., whose decisions are final. Winners will be notified within 2 weeks of selection. All prizes guaranteed to be awarded. Sweepstakes open to legal U.S. and Canadian residents and to residents of other countries and U.S. territories and possessions only where offered & permitted by law. Void where prohibited by law. For a list of major winners, available after 10/31/08, send self-addressed, stamped envelope by 1/31/08 to: "Dream of a Lifetime Sweepstakes" Winners, PO Box 5755, Ellenton, FL 34222-5007.

DREAM OF A LIFETIME GRAND PRIZE GIVEAWAY CONSUMER DISCLOSURES: You have not yet won. No purchase necessary. Grand Prize winner chooses from a variety of merchandise with approximately the same value (e.g., automobiles, vacations, electronics, etc.). Approximate retail value (ARV) of merchandise: up to $30,000 or $25,000 cash option. Estimated odds of winning: 1:12,600,000. To choose automobile/plane/boat or any other vehicle, winner must have appropriate license and assume all responsibility for registration, title, license, taxes, insurance fees and any other options not expressly included. Sweepstakes registered by Ventura Associates, Inc., 1040 6th Ave., NY, NY 10018 & may be presented in different creative presentations by different organizations (the "Presenting Promoter(s)"). Sweepstakes ends 1/31/08.

DREAM OF A LIFETIME DREAM PRIZE GIVEAWAY CONSUMER DISCLOSURES: You have not yet won. No purchase necessary. Prize levels First through Third will offer a variety of merchandise, electronics, jewelry, housewares, etc. First through Third Prize winners only may select cash equivalent of ARV or any prize offered at level won. Values at a given level will be approximately the same. ARV of merchandise prizes & estimated odds of winning: 1 First Prize (ARV: $2,000): 1: 12,600,000; 1 Second Prize (ARV: $1,000): 1:12,600,000; 50 Third Prizes (ARV: $100 each): 1: 252,000; 1,000 Fourth Prizes – Helbros® Dress Watch (ARV: $64 each, no cash option): 1:12,600. Total ARV: $72,000. Sweepstakes registered by Ventura Associates, Inc., 1040 6th Ave., NY, NY 10018 & may be presented in different creative presentations by different organizations (the "Presenting Promoter(s)"). Sweepstakes ends 1/31/08.

DREAM OF A LIFETIME BONUS/EARLY BIRD GIVEAWAY CONSUMER DISCLOSURES: You have not yet won. No purchase necessary. Prize includes 7-day/6-night vacation for two (double occupancy) at Riu Paradise Island Resort, Bahamas and includes deluxe accommodations in an ocean view room with a balcony, all meals and drinks daily, use of gym, and hotel taxes and mandatory hotel imposed gratuities, airport to hotel transfers at destination, and round trip airfare from commercial airport nearest winner's residence. ARV: $5,100, depending on location of winner & fares at time of departure. Any expenses not specified herein are winner's responsibility. Estimated odds of winning: 1:12,600,000. Sweepstakes registered by Ventura Associates, Inc., 1040 6th Ave., NY, NY 10018 & may be presented in different creative presentations by different organizations (the "Presenting Promoter(s)"). Sweepstakes ends 1/31/08.

FOR ANY TRAVEL PRIZE: Travel companion(s) required to sign liability release prior to departure. Dates subject to availability; travel must be completed within 12 months of award. Restrictions & blackout dates apply. Minor must be accompanied by parent or legal guardian.

THE FOLLOWING APPLIES TO ALL OF THE SWEEPSTAKES ABOVE:

No mechanically reproduced entries. No responsibility assumed for lost, late, misdirected, mutilated, damaged, incomplete, illegible or postage-due mail/entries. All such entries will be disqualified. All entries become property of their respective Presenting Promoter & will not be returned or acknowledged. Participating entrants agree to these rules and the decisions of the Judges and the Presenting Promoters, and release the Judges and the Presenting Promoters and their respective parents, subsidiaries and affiliated companies, and all other businesses involved in this sweepstakes, as well as the employees, officers, directors and agents of each, from all claims and liability relating to their participation, acceptance and/or use of prize. Winners assume all liability for any injury or damage caused or claimed to be caused, by participation in this sweepstakes or acceptance, use or redemption of any prize. Presenting Promoters and Ventura Associates, Inc. are not responsible for any printing, production, typographical, human or other error of any nature in printing of the sweepstakes notice, entry form or prize notice, or administration of the sweepstakes or in the announcement of the prizes. Any sweepstakes notice, entry form or prize notice containing a printing, production, typographical, human or other error of any nature shall be deemed null and void. Ventura Associates and any of the Presenting Promoters are not liable for payment of any prize to entrants who have violated these official rules. Winners acknowledge that the Judges, Presenting Promoters and all other businesses concerned with this sweepstakes and their agents do not make, nor are in any manner responsible for any warranty or representations, expressed or implied, in fact or in law, relative to the quality, conditions, fitness or merchantability of any aspect of any merchandise prize except that such prize shall be subject to manufacturer's standard warranty.

A winner may be required (at judges' discretion) to sign & return an Affidavit of Eligibility/Liability Release, & where legally permissible, a Publicity Release within 14 days of date on notification. Failure to execute and return any required documentation within the time period specified and/or return of any prize notification or prize as undeliverable may result in disqualification and selection of an alternate winner. Acceptance of a prize by a minor will require execution by parent or legal guardian of required documentation. Costs for goods or services not specified are winner's responsibility. No substitution of prizes except by Presenting Promoter due to unavailability. Except where prohibited by law, winners consent to use of their names, hometowns, prizes won & likenesses for promotional purposes on behalf of all Presenting Promoters without additional compensation. Void where prohibited by law. All federal, state, provincial & local laws & regulations apply. Prize values in U.S. currency. No transfer or assignment of prize permitted. Winners responsible for all taxes on prizes. U.S. laws govern all aspects of this sweepstakes. All disputes and claims relating to this Sweepstakes shall be resolved in the United States.

Winner selection executed at 1040 6th Ave., NY, NY 10018. Ventura Associates, the independent judging organization, has provided all prizes at no charge. Ventura Associates, Inc. and/or Presenting Promoters reserve the right to modify, suspend, or terminate the promotion if it becomes technically corrupted. In such event, prizes will be awarded from eligible entries received prior to this date of termination. Employees of Presenting Promoters, Ventura Associates, Inc., their respective advertising & promotion agencies & any other person or organization directly involved with the promotion & their respective immediate families and/or household members of such employees are ineligible.

Canadian residents, to win, must first correctly answer, unaided, a time-limited mathematical skill testing question administered by mail. Any litigation regarding the conduct & awarding of a prize in this publicity contest by a resident of the province of Quebec may be submitted to the Regie des alcools, des courses et des jeux.

17 • HIS NEXT BRUSH WITH THE LAW INVOLVED A HIGH-SPEED MOTORCYCLE CHASE—AND CROSS-DRESSING
Shortly after his release, 50 was mistaken for a murder suspect who owned a motorcycle similar to his. When a squad car tried to stop 50 on Queens's Guy Brewer Boulevard, he fled, escaping only after several squad cars and a helicopter had given chase. He snuck into his grandmother's house, donned a dress and a wig, and slipped past patrolmen outside. "They must have been like, 'Damn, that's an ugly bitch,'" 50 jokes. The real murderer was apprehended later that day.

18 • HE'S A PRETTY EASYGOING DAD
Does 50 let 10-year-old Marquise listen to his music? "Of course. If I say something a little racy, I'll be like, 'You know what that means?' and he'll be like, 'Yeah.' He already knows. The kids know. The problem is that their parents aren't asking them the questions. I went into his room the other night and he was on this porno site—big-booty girls. He was like, 'I just clicked a link!' Kids are gonna be kids, man."

19 • A QUEENS HIP-HOP LEGEND GAVE HIM HIS BIG BREAK
The same year Marquise was born, in 1997, 50 Cent met Run-D.M.C.'s Jam Master Jay at a club. A childhood fan of Rakim, 50 had written only one rhyme, in 1995, for fun—"I don't remember it exactly, but it was street," he says. Jay was impressed by his singsong delivery and by his story, and brought 50 into his fold.

20 • WELL, IT WAS *ALMOST* HIS BIG BREAK
Things moved quickly: Jay brought 50 to the attention of Columbia Records, they signed him, he recorded an album, then ... nothing. "When I met Jay, I wasn't a starving artist," 50 says. "But right after I committed to music, I starved." To keep up with the bills, he returned to hustling.

22 • OK, SCRATCH THAT. A PAID ASSASSIN GAVE HIM HIS BIG BREAK
On May 24, 2000, a gunman shot 50 Cent nine times in front of his grandmother's house. In his autobiography, 50 hints that the hit came about because he'd insulted drug kingpin Kenneth "Supreme" McGriff, but when asked explicitly in interviews about McGriff's involvement, 50 has demurred. Either way, he was hospitalized, Columbia dropped him—and, unbeknownst to him, his glorious future was guaranteed.

23 • HIS NEXT MENTOR WAS ... "WEIRD AL"?
With a head full of new rhymes and no label to release them, 50 Cent turned to New York's mix-tape circuit. Instead of filling the samizdat titles with throwaway rhymes, he approached them like albums: "I wrote my freestyles in song format." He also recorded parodies of hits. As he put it later, "I took the 'Weird Al' Yankovic approach."

24 • AFTER HE GOT SHOT, HE BEGAN WEARING A BULLETPROOF VEST—AND STILL WEARS ONE TODAY
When 50 started booking shows, advertising his whereabouts made him nervous. "I wore a vest 'cause I knew it could pop off," he explains. During 50's first tour, Marquise wore one, too.

25 • EMINEM HEARD ONE OF 50'S MIX TAPES, FLEW HIM TO L.A. AND, WITH DR. DRE, SIGNED HIM TO A MILLION-DOLLAR DEAL
"I was at the airport to go see them when my vest set off the metal detector," 50 recalls. A TSA supervisor who'd heard his songs let him through anyway. "If they hadn't let me take the vest, I probably wouldn't have gone."

Off the cuff: NYPD arrests 50 for an "unsafe lane change"; with his patron saints at a Shade 45 party.

26 • HIS IS THE FASTEST-SELLING DEBUT OF ALL TIME
In its first week, 2003's *Get Rich or Die Tryin'* sold nearly 900,000 copies—and did it again in week two.

27 • HE'S AVAILABLE FOR BAR MITZVAHS!
"The last Bar Mitzvah I booked, I got paid $500,000 for 30 minutes," 50 explains. "That's not a fixed rate, but it's in the ballpark."

28 • HE COLLECTS HIS OWN BRAND OF SNEAKERS
"I got 500 pairs," he says. "All G-Unit. A bunch of different colors, limited editions. Tony Yayo is a size over me, but he'll squeeze his feet into mine and borrow them."

29 • HE LIKES GEORGE BUSH
After Kanye West railed on Dubya post-Katrina, 50 defended the prez, calling him a "gangsta."

30 • HE KEEPS HIS MOST REVEALING MUSIC FOR HIMSELF
On 2005's "Hate It or Love It," 50 rapped about his mother's bisexuality—but that was an exception. "You don't want to be too complex," he says. "I have records that I wrote for myself, and they're playing on my computer at home. Sort of like a diary. But I'm not gonna waste the public's time with them."

31 • HE'S BUDDIES WITH ROBERT DE NIRO
50's burgeoning acting career has been respectable—the autobiographical *Get Rich or Die Tryin'*; the war flick *Home of the Brave*—if not spectacularly successful. But his biggest role yet is ahead of him, starring opposite De Niro in the upcoming thriller *New Orleans*. "He invited me to his house—gave me that De Niro look, sizing me up," 50 says. "But I passed the test."

32 • HIS NEW ALBUM HAS ONE HELL OF A GUEST LIST
Curtis, which 50 says will include several returns to the street-hardened, wisecracking "old 50," also features collaborations with Akon, Nicole Scherzinger, Robin Thicke, Mary J. Blige and Justin Timberlake. "Basically," 50 explains, "it's one of my best pieces of work."

33 • NEXT STOP: RETIREMENT!
... Sort of. 50 has alluded to leaving rap behind once his five-record contract expires. "I'll put out albums like Dre, every five years or every seven," he clarifies. "I enjoy rapping, but there's so much more out there." [BLENDER]

21

HE BECAME A PAPA IN 1997—AND STARTED WORKING ON HIS CRACK-GAME EXIT STRATEGY

When then-girlfriend Shaniqua Tompkins gave birth to his son Marquise, 50 quit dealing. As he puts it: "My mama's motivation to get into the game was my motivation to get out."

FROM TOP: SPLASH NEWS; *NEW YORK POST*; FRANK MICELOTTA/GETTY IMAGES; LAN/RETNA.

"Before I started using Proactiv®, it was an uphill battle, but now I'm blemish-free."

Kelly isn't the only celebrity who uses Proactiv® Solution! Many actresses, models and singers rely on its gentle but effective formula to keep their skin camera-ready. Proactiv® Solution is the number one acne treatment system of its kind. Millions of people have discovered our exclusive system for sensational skin.

A few minutes a day can help keep acne away.

Three simple steps—cleanse, tone and repair—are all it takes. In fact, if you're not completely satisfied, send the bottles back within 60 days of delivery (even if they're empty) for a full refund, less shipping and handling. So order today. And like Kelly Clarkson, enjoy blemish-free tomorrows.

Before

After

Individual results will vary.

Rodan & Fields

proactiv® SOLUTION

COMPLETE SYSTEM ONLY $19.95

Save over 50% off individual product prices.

Call now!
1-877-605-6050

FREE delivery upgrade to PRIORITY MAIL UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

☑ **YES!** I would love to have clear, smooth, blemish-free skin! Send me my **Proactiv® Solution 30-day kit** with a risk-free 60-day guarantee! One complete system for only $19.95 plus $5.95 shipping and handling via PRIORITY MAIL (U.S. funds only). CA, IA, NC & PA residents please add applicable sales tax.

Payment method:

☐ Check or Money Order enclosed for $25.90 (19.95 + 5.95 s/h) plus applicable sales tax, payable to Proactiv® Solution.

☐ Charge my ☐ VISA ☐ M/C ☐ AmEx ☐ Discover

Acct.#_____ Exp._____

Signature_____

By ordering now, you'll be automatically enrolled in the Proactiv® Solution Clear Skin Club. After 30 days, you'll automatically receive a new 60-day kit (less two free bonuses) every two months, and you'll lock in the low price of only $19.95 per month (plus s/h and any applicable sales tax per shipment), charged to the credit card provided above, for as long as you are a member. There are no minimum number of kits to buy, and you can cancel future shipments by calling customer service at any time.

Name_____

Address_____ Apt.#_____

City_____ State____ Zip_____

Phone(_____)_____
(in case we have a question about your order)

CALL NOW OR MAIL TO:
Proactiv® Solution c/o Guthy-Renker®
P.O. Box 362965, Des Moines, IA 50336
www.proactiv.com

©2007 GUTHY-RENKER

335-327584

2 Free Bonuses, a $20 Value!

Order now and get the Proactiv® Solution Refining Mask (it boosts the benefits of the 3-Step System) and Face the Facts, a guide to everything you ever wanted to know about acne. Especially how to get rid of it.

rock concert loud

without a hint of bad behavior

MONITOR SERIES

If you're getting Paradigm® speakers, you're getting the best ... for 17 years in a row only Paradigm® has been Rated #1*

*Performance/Value in the annual *Inside Track* Dealer Survey

"I was awed ... absolutely superb ... a masterpiece of modern-day speaker design ... BIG, BOLD, VIBRANT SOUND ... a bargain-hunting audiophile's dream."

"Paradigm has built its decades-old reputation on delivering sound that many manufacturers can't match even at multiples of the price," says GoodSound! The Monitor Series is a perfect example – the high efficiency and power handling of these speakers mean they compete directly with the output of major brands of horn speakers. Monitor Series speakers not only play as loud, their sound is authentically high-end. It's a difference you can hear!

And compared with all other major speaker brands, when it comes to playing loud and playing clean, Paradigm® Monitor Series speakers blow the competition away!

Monitor 11 (shown) available in Rosenut, Cherry and Black Ash.
Visit **www.paradigm.com** to learn more.

Quotes by Doug Schneider, GoodSound! in his review of the Atom Monitor

Paradigm®

THE ULTIMATE IN SOUND FOR MUSIC AND HOME THEATER™

© Paradigm Electronics Inc.

THE POWERGEEK 25

THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE IN ONLINE MUSIC

FROM RUSSIAN PIRATES TO MYSPACE TOM, WE COUNT DOWN THE ROCKINGEST NERDS ON THE NET

By JON DOLAN, ROB LEVINE, BEN SISARIO and DOUGLAS WOLK

Illustrations by SEAN McCABE

25

PETE WENTZ (NET-OBSESSED ROCK STAR)

BIG IDEAS START SMALL Seeing unauthorized photos of his penis online must've deeply influenced the Fall Out Boy bassist. Through his LiveJournal page, the Fall Out Boy site and the social-networking service Friends or Enemies, he brings fans into every aspect of his life, turning his personality into a platform for marketing everything from the bands on his label, Decaydance, to the Honda Civic, which is sponsoring FOB's current tour. "They were the first band to embrace video diaries and MySpace," says an editor at the Web site Absolutepunk. "They've taken having a dialogue with their fans to a whole new level."

A NICE LITTLE SIDE GIG Buzznet, which hosts Friends or Enemies, just received a $6 million round of financing from Redpoint Ventures, a firm that initially backed MySpace.

24 · BOB LEFSETZ

THE LEFSETZ LETTER

(MUSIC-BUSINESS BLOG)

MAD AS HELL "The music industry is based on greed, and nobody is tech savvy enough to understand where it's going," says the 54-year-old pundit, who is to record-biz bigwigs what Keith Olbermann is to the Bush administration. His feverishly updated e-mail missives blast everyone from XM Radio ("business pricks in it for the money") to MTV ("means nothing"). What he does like: "getting more music to more people."

THANK YOU, SIR, MAY I HAVE ANOTHER? Everyone from David Geffen to David Gilmour reads Lefsetz, a nonpracticing entertainment lawyer. Steve Jobs once arranged for Lefsetz to receive a free laptop after he complained to Jobs's friend, Eagles manager Irving Azoff, about flaws in one he'd purchased. "Everyone loves Lefsetz. Even the people who hate him," says Rhapsody's Tim Quirk.

23 · ERIC GARLAND

BIGCHAMPAGNE

(RESEARCH FIRM)

THEIR DAYS ARE NUMBERED In 2000, as the music business reeled from rampant file-sharing, Garland, a music-obsessed management consultant, teamed with a friend to create a kind of Nielsen ratings for the practice of peer-to-peer trading. BigChampagne tracks Internet traffic to determine the popularity of songs overall and in particular markets, and sells that research to interested parties.

CHAMPAGNE SUPERNOVA The major labels use Garland's service, so if a song is being heavily traded in, say, Dubuque, they can push local radio stations to play it. Radio conglomerates use the service, too. "They need to be adjusting the music they play based on what the audience wants," Garland says.

POURING IT ON BigChampagne also incorporates data from other online sites, such as AOL Music and Yahoo!. It will soon release SmallChampagne, a less expensive product, for the indie world.

WENTZ SOURCE PHOTO: DENISE TRUSCELLO/WIREIMAGE

Staying ahead of the curve on Purevolume.

22 · BRETT WOITUNSKI

PUREVOLUME

(INDIE-PUNK COMMUNITY SITE)

A BETTER MOUSETRAP With a sleek design, a smoothly functioning audio player and no room for spam, Purevolume is a connoisseur's alternative to MySpace. Its 425,000 bands attract the Bamboozle crowd.

PIZZA BOY MAKES GOOD Woitunski, 26, labored on Purevolume for six months after graduating from UMass Amherst, delivering pizzas to keep the lights on. Launched in December 2003, the site has 1 million users whose average age is 20—fish in a barrel for punk labels like Tooth & Nail, whose Underoath scored 80,000 downloads in one day last year for a new song.

CHALLENGING TOM As strictly a band-promotion site, Purevolume has avoided direct competition with MySpace. But with a new site, Virb.com, Woitunski aims to do social networking the same way he did Purevolume: by making it "simple and usable."

21 · MATTHEW PERPETUA

FLUXBLOG

(MP3 BLOG)

BEDROOM HITSEEKER The Queens-based writer is widely regarded as the first and greatest MP3 blogger, establishing his home for "alternative universe pop hits" in 2002. Today, he gets 200,000 unique views a month, exposing obscure Euro-pop and indie-rock acts to an impossibly large audience. "He's the best writer with the best taste," says Scott "Stereogum" Lapatine.

MOM, WHERE'S MY M.I.A. CD?! Perpetua started blogging when he moved home after graduating from Parsons, a Manhattan art school. He was soon offered an A&R gig with a British label (he turned it down), instead deciding to spin his impeccable rep into a career reviewing music and films. "I'd like to try writing comics," he says.

OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE MUCH? He has another blog where he reviews every R.E.M. song, inspiring Björk-, Talking Heads- and Pearl Jam-themed copycats.

20 · DAVID PAKMAN

EMUSIC

(ONLINE RETAILER)

PLAYS WELL WITH OTHERS Under Pakman, eMusic has become the second-largest online-music retailer by selling device-agnostic, unrestricted MP3s. That has kept the major labels away so far. But Pakman has attracted hundreds of indies, plus 300,000 subscribers who pay between $10 and $20 per month for 30 to 75 downloads.

HIGH FIDELITY Pakman is an ardent believer in "the long tail," the idea that selling lots of small releases can add up to big business. And while alt mainstays like Cat Power are big sellers, the site's reviewers give breaks to baby bands like Beirut, whose early sales came mostly from eMusic.

INDIE ROOTS Pakman helped form Apple's Music Group in late 1994. At the time, he was playing drums in a band that was offered a major-label demo deal. >>

Apple iPhone

Not since Alexander Graham Bell uttered the statement "Mr. Watson, come here. I want to see you" has a telecommunications device so profoundly altered the world as we know it. No? Well, the iPhone *is* justifiably lust-worthy. That beautiful 3.5-inch touch screen makes it a joy to surf the Web, send e-mails, watch movies or scroll through your music collection. (And you can *talk* on the thing, too!) The 8GB (max) storage may seem scant when you're used to an 80GB iPod, but it'll give you a good excuse to weed all that ska-core from your playlist.

$500 for 4GB; $600 for 8GB; apple.com

19 · BRAM COHEN AND ASHWIN NAVIN

BITTORRENT

(FILE-SHARING SERVICE)

DYNAMIC DUO Cohen, the geek, learned the BASIC programming language at 5, participated in the U.S. Mathematical Olympiad in high school and created BitTorrent, a particularly efficient file-sharing protocol, in 2001. Navin, the businessman, worked on Wall Street, then in corporate development at Yahoo!, before joining the company in 2004.

THE GEEKS WHO CAME IN FROM THE COLD Also in 2004, BitTorrent went legit, and Navin began meeting with labels and studios about distributing their content. The site currently offers some free songs and music videos, and sells films from four studios.

DELIVER THE WORD Labels use BitTorrent to distribute videos for free. "It's a no-brainer, because it's a site that gets a lot of traffic," says Jordan Kurland, manager of Death Cab for Cutie.

18 · JASON TATE

ABSOLUTEPUNK

(INDIE-PUNK NEWS AND COMMUNITY)

DINOSAUR 2.0 A bulletin-board site for punk seems so 1998, and, indeed, that's when Tate, then a high school sophomore in Portland, Oregon, started Absolutepunk. But it survived the blink-182 era to become the essential Web echo chamber for all things punk and emo, with 150,000 users writing as many as 60,000 gushy, newsy and polemical posts a day.

SCHOOL DAZE Early on, Tate had trouble getting ads—labels would call, but he'd be stuck in class. Ads are now handled by a third party, and Absolutepunk remains closely watched by the industry. Pete Wentz of Fall Out Boy says the site was critical to the band's early success. "It blows my mind that no one has thrown Tate an A&R job," Wentz says.

17 · "OINKYLICIOUS" ALAN

OINK'S PINK PALACE

(INVITE-ONLY FILE-SHARING SITE)

MAN OF MYSTERY The 24-year-old British czar of the top-flight illicit music-torrent site does his best to keep a low profile (nobody seems to know his last name)—although he has an account at Flickr and another at Last.fm, which reports that his favorite artists include Regina Spektor and Portishead.

PIGPEN WITH A VELVET ROPE Invitation-only and legendary for its Draconian rules, Oink invariably gets leaks before anyone else. Regular users slurp up dozens or hundreds of albums a week.

THE PALACE GUARD Oink operates within a cone of silence—although, as of earlier this year, it supposedly had about 120,000 users, who are required to stay active on the service or lose their membership.

16 · VADIM MAMOTIN

ALLOFMP3

(DISCOUNT RETAILER)

SAFE EUROPEAN HOME Mamotin's Moscow-based online store sells iPod-compatible MP3s for about 5 to 30 cents each and offers more than half a million songs, including selections from iTunes holdouts like the Beatles and Metallica. He says the service pays royalties to ROMS, the Russian copyright-collection agency. But no label has allowed its songs to be sold that way—or received payment from ROMS.

CULTURAL REVOLUTION Mamotin has said that he and some other programmers started the site as a hobby and that it now has 5.5 million registered users. But he evaded questions during an October online press conference and blamed the site's problems on the music "cartel."

COLD WAR In December, the major labels sued Mediaservices, the site's parent company. And U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab has hinted its continuation could keep Russia out of the World Trade Organization.

HOT GADGET ALERT 02

Samsung UpStage

The UpStage is the mullet of tech devices: Business in the front (a standard cell phone) and party in the back (an MP3 player that, with a memory-card upgrade, can pack up to 2,000 tracks). Download songs from the Sprint Music store—starting at 99 cents apiece—which boasts more than 1.5 million tunes, to both the UpStage and your computer. The "battery wallet" (a thin case with an embedded battery) boosts talk time by about four hours—so you can prattle on and on about whether or not Win Butler actually stole that dude's basketball.

$99 with two-year contract; sprint.com

15 · TIM QUIRK

RHAPSODY

(SUBSCRIPTION MUSIC SERVICE)

IDEOLOGY "We're in the midst of an earth-shattering transition from music as a product to music as a service," says Quirk, the executive editor of RealNetworks' play-on-demand service.

ALL YOU CAN EAT Rhapsody, like the retooled Napster, is staking its future on customers buying access to a large catalogue instead of individual songs; they've attracted upward of 1.4 million subscribers.

HE FOUGHT THE LAW Quirk, 42, has an artist-friendly reputation, having spent most of the '80s and '90s as the singer for the joke-rock band Too Much Joy, best remembered for their legal run-ins with the Secret Service, Bozo the Clown and cops in Florida's Broward County.

14 · ANTHONY VOLODKIN

THE HYPE MACHINE

(MP3 BLOG AGGREGATOR)

JUNIOR EXECUTIVE The youngest *macher* in the music business, Volodkin launched his one-stop MP3-blog search engine in April 2005, when he was a sophomore at New York's Hunter College. Now it gets 50,000 visitors a day and serves as a clearinghouse for more than 1,000 audio blogs.

IMMIGRANT SONG Born in Moscow, Volodkin moved to the U.S. >>

SAMSUNG UPSTAGE: DAVIES + STARR.

NISSAN
True performance.
The all-new Nissan Altima Coupe
NISSAN
SHIFT_

13

PEREZ HILTON

PEREZHILTON (GOSSIP BLOG)

ITEM! The catty Internet gossip columnist (real name: Mario Lavandeira) gets between 4 and 5 million page-views a day, but when he writes about music, he turns off the snark and turns on the gush—notably for colorful women like Beth Ditto, Amy Winehouse and Lily Allen.

THE TASTEMAKING MACHINE His constant enthusiasm was more or less responsible for U.K. glam-pop singer Mika's debut album selling 50,000 copies in its first two weeks, while folk naïf Jenny Owen Youngs told *Newsweek* that an endorsement from Hilton got her songs on MySpace played 60,000 times in one day.

YOU'VE GOT BUZZ! Hilton says he finds out about new music from enthusiastic readers' e-mails, and listens to at least a little of anything that is recommended to him; he's also hoping to start his own label.

at the age of 12. Formerly a one-man operation—a hobby, really, with its Internet-hosting bills paid by advertising—the Hype Machine now has a four-person staff while Volodkin works out funding for the site.

WAVING THE FLAG Volodkin gets fannishly excited about all kinds of online-music geekery—for instance, a new Web interface for Rhapsody—and blogs about it at his other site, nonstandard.net.

12 · MITCH BAINWOL

RIAA

(MUSIC-BIZ TRADE GROUP)

SHARE ALIKE Bainwol, a well-connected Republican who took over the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) in 2003, has his work cut out for him. Lawsuits have slowed the growth of illegal file sharing, as did the Supreme Court's 2005 ruling against Grokster. But the recording industry's problems have become global—look at Sweden's Pirate Bay and Russia's AllofMp3—and CD sales have plummeted about 20 percent this year alone.

KING OF THE HILL Bainwol, who served as chief of staff to former Senate majority leader Bill Frist, has used his Beltway contacts to push RIAA-backed legislation.

APPROVAL RATINGS Suing a 12-year-old for piracy proved a PR nightmare—as did pressuring colleges to limit on-campus file sharing. But Bainwol's raid in January on Atlanta mix-tape impresario—and major-label artist—DJ Drama may have been his least popular, most perplexing move to date.

11 · SCOTT LAPATINE

STEREOGUM

(INDIE-ROCK BLOG)

ONE-STOP GEEKING Ex-VH1 employee Scott Lapatine's cliquish blog is the first place inquiring indie-rock fans go for new tracks, videos, news and debate. Stereogum has more than 500,000 monthly readers, twice as many as the closest-competing blog. "Pitchfork is a porthole; we're a community," says Lapatine, 29.

AND IT PAYS Stereogum received a rumored $3 million infusion >>

PEREZ HILTON SOURCE PHOTO: RETNA.

True coupe.

The all-new Nissan Altima Coupe

Built from the ground up to be a true coupe. The true technology of a fuel-efficient* CVT transmission.† And the true performance of Nissan's award-winning VQ engine.**† The 270-hp V6 Nissan Altima Coupe.† Starting at $20,490. As shown, $25,390.†† Learn more at **NissanUSA.com.**

NISSAN®

SHIFT_

*EPA-estimated 19 mpg city and 26 mpg highway mileage for Altima Coupe 3.5 SE w/CVT. Actual mileage may vary. **_Ward's Auto World_ and _Ward's_ Automotive Group, 1995-2007. †Optional feature. ††"Starting at" MSRP for Altima Coupe 2.5 S. "As shown" Altima Coupe 3.5 SE w/CVT, $25,390. Excludes tax, title, license, destination charge and options. Dealer sets actual price. Nissan, the Nissan Brand Symbol, "SHIFT_" tagline and Nissan model names are Nissan trademarks. Always wear your seat belt, and please don't drink and drive. ©2007 Nissan North America, Inc.

of investment capital recently, allowing Lapatine to expand his staff to four full-timers. "It wasn't nearly that much money," he says. "No one knows the exact figure except me and my wife."

DON'T HATE ME CUZ I'M ALWAYS THERE FIRST He posted about Arcade Fire and Clap Your Hands Say Yeah before anyone else.

10 · CORAN CAPSHAW

MUSICTODAY

(ONLINE TICKETER AND MERCHANDISER)

THE FANS In 2000, the Charlottesville, Virginia–based Capshaw founded Musictoday, which sells merchandise and concert tickets online for more than 500 acts, including the Rolling Stones, the Police and the Dave Matthews Band (which Capshaw manages). The company, which also creates and maintains individual artists' Web sites, does about $120 million a year in sales. Last summer, Capshaw sold 51 percent of the company to concert giant Live Nation.

THE BANDS In the early '90s, Capshaw booked an undiscovered Dave Matthews Band to play Tuesday nights at Trax, a Charlottesville bar. He also owns ATO Records (My Morning Jacket, Patty Griffin) along with Matthews and other partners.

THE PLANS Capshaw's holdings include the 3,500-seat Charlottesville Pavilion, and the entrepreneur has become a major franchisee of the munchies-satisfying burger chain Five Guys.

09 · CHRISTIAN SCHMID

RAPIDSHARE

(FILE-HOSTING SERVICE)

PAY TO PLAY RapidShare lets anyone upload or download large files—up to 100MB—on its servers, although you have to pay for membership if you want to get more than one every couple of hours. Music buffs have found the service ideal for trading entire albums, though the company removes copyrighted material when rights-holders complain.

SECRET WEAPON Though barely known outside of file-sharing circles, RapidShare is among the 20 most popular sites on the Web, according to Alexa.com; RapidShare says its users download more than 370 terabytes of information a day, enough to fill half a million CD-Rs.

SHELL GAME The original Rapidshare.de announced last October that its servers were all full, and users began switching to Rapidshare.com. The companies claim to be entirely separate entities, although both are based in Europe, and Schmid, the dot-com's founder, CEO and tech guru, also ran Rapidshare.de.

08 · GREG BILDSON

LIMEWIRE

(FILE-SHARING PROGRAM)

MILLIONS AND MILLIONS SERVED One of the largest P2P services still in operation, LimeWire claims more than 4 million daily users—although antipiracy spammers have made it tougher to find popular tracks.

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS LimeWire's top brass, including 40-year-old chief technology/operations officer Bildson, all have backgrounds in finance, and they're interested in turning their service into a serious moneymaking operation.

BUYING IN Some labels, like the new Suretone imprint, are hiring companies to arrange for their fledgling bands to come up on LimeWire searches for other artists.

SUE ME/SUE YOU BLUES When the four major labels sued LimeWire last year, LimeWire sued right back, charging the RIAA with an antitrust violation.

07 · MARTIN STIKSEL AND FELIX MILLER

LAST.FM

(MUSIC COMMUNITY WEB SITE)

CASHING IN In May, CBS bought the London-based music networking site for $280 million—not quite a YouTube- or MySpace-level goldmine, but not chump change either.

UNIVERSAL PLAYLIST Last.fm has more than 20 million users and lets them "scrobble"—publicly display—any of the nearly 550 million tracks they play each month; it's helped to turn solitary listening into a community activity. The Hype Machine's Volodkin calls Stiksel and Miller "the people who inspire me most."

WHERE'S THE GOLD-PLATED LIMO? The company started as a labor >>

HOT GADGET ALERT 03

Helio Ocean

If you want to avoid being just another iPhone-clutching sheep (after all, you're an individual, *man*) or Apple's $500 price tag seems awfully steep (OK, you're just cheap), then the Helio Ocean is a good alternative. Its 2.4-inch display screen slides vertically to reveal a classic alphanumeric keypad for making calls and horizontally for a full QWERTY keyboard for all your texting and instant-messaging needs. You'll get up to 5.1 hours of gum-flapping time and a stellar 15 hours for blasting tunes (up to 2GB worth with a memory card) per charge.

$295; helio.com

HELIO OCEAN: DAVIES • STARR; CAPSHAW: JEN FARIELLO

OUR OIL CAN BEAT UP YOUR OIL.

Castrol SYNTEC 5W-30 maintained maximum horsepower 29% longer than the leading conventional oil in new torture tests. If you want to dominate the road, get the oil engineered to kick some asphalt. See the torture test for yourself at castrolsyntec.com.

IT'S MORE THAN JUST OIL. IT'S LIQUID ENGINEERING.™ Castrol™

ADVERTISEMENT

Castrol SYNTEC

PRESENTS

GET YOUR RIDE SUPED UP TO STARDOM

FOR MANY, NOTHING SAYS "I'M A STAR" LIKE A SUPED UP ride—and today, your car says as much about you and your lifestyle as your bling, your ink and your music. Castrol SYNTEC and Alabama's own rising hip-hop star, Rich Boy—known for his own driving beats and high-gear ambition—got together to find out the real deal on the hot cars and the superstar car lovers who make 'em rock! Get pumped up and pimped out with a singer who proves he is a complete overhaul of your average rapper, with the rides he thinks, are 'suped up for stardom.

IT'S MORE THAN JUST OIL. IT'S LIQUID ENGINEERING.™ Castrol

"MY RIDES ARE SPECIAL SO I MAKE SURE I TAKE CARE OF THEM, AND I DO THAT WITH CASTROL. THEY LOOK JUST AS GOOD AS THEY RUN."
-Rich Boy

Photo by Zach Wolfe

RICH BOY'S SELF-TITLED ALBUM IS AVAILABLE NOW ON INTERSCOPE RECORDS. VISIT RICHBOYONLINE.COM FOR MORE.

of love during the dot-com collapse—in its early days, programmers literally camped out on the roof—so, Stiksel says, "when we got the money, there were no indulgences."

06 · IAN ROGERS

YAHOO! MUSIC

(MUSIC PORTAL)

O.G. (ORIGINAL GEEK) Before joining Yahoo! in 2003, Rogers built some of the first music Web sites and rocked new media for the Beastie Boys' label, Grand Royal.

BIG STAR With 23 million monthly visitors, Yahoo! Music is one of the most popular music sites on the Web, as well as a leader in online video, with more than 10,000 in its cache.

NOW PLAYING Rogers just added Gracenote's lyrics database to the site, and he recently met with Congressmen to discuss how rising song-usage fees for digital radio could cripple the business.

GEEK CRED Rogers's blog, at Fistfulayen.com, offers refreshingly uncorporate comments on everything from online music to the Stooges' live show.

05 · RYAN SCHREIBER

PITCHFORK

(INDIE-ROCK 'ZINE)

BUZZ BIBLE "In 1995 there was nothing going on for indie music online," says Schreiber, then a Minneapolis music fan hungry to write CD reviews on this new thing called "the Internet." Twelve years later, the site he started is the most successful online music publication, with 160,000 daily readers and the power to create instant audiences for tiny bands like Art Brut and the Go! Team before they even release albums.

STEP OFF! Schreiber, who lives in New York, receives several e-mails from venture capitalists with schemes for turning his baby into big business. "I don't even read them," he says.

MMM ... RAMEN Pitchfork offers its writers a lot of freedom but not a ton of cash—a 700-word review nets $100.

04 · DOUG MORRIS

UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

(RECORDING COMPANY)

THE LITIGIOUS GORILLA Chairman/CEO Morris, 68, a lifelong record man who cowrote a 1966 hit for the Chiffons, has been the most powerful label boss since 1998, when Universal merged with PolyGram and grabbed a one-third market share. The industry looks to him for big policy moves, and for years his approach to most digital challenges has been simple: sue.

A PIECE OF THE ACTION In a move seen as both desperate and smartly adaptive, Morris has shifted strategy and now wants to collect a tariff everywhere music enters the picture. And he has the muscle and the cash to do it. He's wrangled a $1 royalty from Microsoft on every Zune player sold, and paid $2 billion for BMG Music Publishing, creating a publishing giant that stands to make bundles on licensing and other fees—essential revenue streams, now that sales of plastic are plunging fast.

03 · CHAD HURLEY AND STEVE CHEN

YOUTUBE

(VIDEO-SHARING SITE)

FROM AN ACORN Chief Technology Officer Chen, CEO Hurley and Jawed Karim launched YouTube in early 2005. It's now the fourth most popular site on the Internet, and it's becoming the starmaker MTV used to be—OK Go's YouTube clip of "Here It Goes Again" single-handedly broke the band (and made treadmills cool).

D.I.Y. OR DON'T Nobody knows how many user-generated clips have unauthorized soundtracks, amid all those "Lazy Sunday" reenactments and cute-baby movies, but some of them may be disappearing soon—the company has struck deals with the four major record groups.

IN THE MONEY AGAIN Last October, Google bought YouTube for $1.65 billion; Hurley and Chen each pocketed more than $300 million worth of Google stock.

KEEP THE CAM RUNNING Chen is a major music buff—the videos he has uploaded to the site >>

Creative Zen Stone

Thinking about hitting the gym to drop the excess flab you've gained during countless couch-bound Xbox sessions? Make this drastic lifestyle change a little easier with the help of the featherweight Creative Zen Stone. This MP3 player comes in six colors, holds up to 1GB (250 songs) and, unless you transform into a true gym rat (unlikely), has enough battery life (10 hours) to carry you through at least two weeks worth of workouts. Program your own playlist or go crazy with the dedicated random button.

$40; us.creative.com

CREATIVE ZEN STONE: DAVIES • STARR.

ADVERTISEMENT

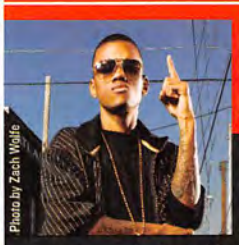


Photo by Zach Wolfe

THE FINALISTS

Castrol SYNTEC challenged readers to tell their personal car makeover story–how they took it from plain to insane–by sending in before-and-after photos, and giving us a behind-the-scenes look at what makes their car road-ready!

Castrol SYNTEC's Suped Up for Stardom judges and experts filtered through a nation of powered-up cars to drive home the best of the best transformations–and selected four of the finest rides from across the nation. From engine overhauls to picture-perfect paint jobs, take a look at the top choices of cars that have taken it to the next level!

BEFORE

AFTER

ANTHONY COFFEY

HOMETOWN: Scottsboro, AL
WHIP: 1989 Oldsmobile Cutlass • "[It was a] slow process... just trying [different] stuff. Redoing this and that until I found something that worked."

BEFORE

AFTER

BROCK ODOM

HOMETOWN: Land O' Lakes, FL
WHIP: 1986 Buick Grand National • "I've been using [Castrol SYNTEC] forever... I love the performance of it."

BEFORE

AFTER

JERMAINE BROOKINS

HOMETOWN: Mobile, AL
WHIP: 2004 Chevrolet Monte Carlo • "I got new rims, added graphics and got an A-tag for the front to finish the outside–so it was like having a whole new car."

BEFORE

AFTER

DENNIS LABORADA

HOMETOWN: Leavenworth, KY
WHIP: 2002 Honda Civic • "I love [my car] because it's a part of me..."

ROCK YOUR OWN RIDE

FEELING INSPIRED BY THE "bad to rad" tranformations you see? Transform your own wheels into a road-ready head-turner—and give your car a style overhaul! Here are three hints on how you can be a master of the makeover and the talk of the town.

IT'S WHO YOU KNOW: You may have vision and all that, but unless you're a professional...SEE a professional. An auto-accessory store will give you great advice and get you on your way.

KNOW WHAT'S SHOT AND WHAT'S NOT: Figure out how to spend your cash wisely—and if your suspension has seen better days, you should forget about installing the mobile ping pong table for now.

LOOK UNDER THE HOOD: Because no matter how good you look, it's all about the sweet ride on the road.

To vote for your favorite, visit
BLENDERPROMO.COM/CASTROL

Unlock the power of your car, visit
CASTROLSYNTEC.COM

IT'S MORE THAN JUST OIL. IT'S LIQUID ENGINEERING.™ Castrol

include a couple of live Arcade Fire clips he has personally shot.

02 · TOM ANDERSON AND CHRIS DEWOLFE

MYSPACE

(SOCIAL-NETWORKING SITE)

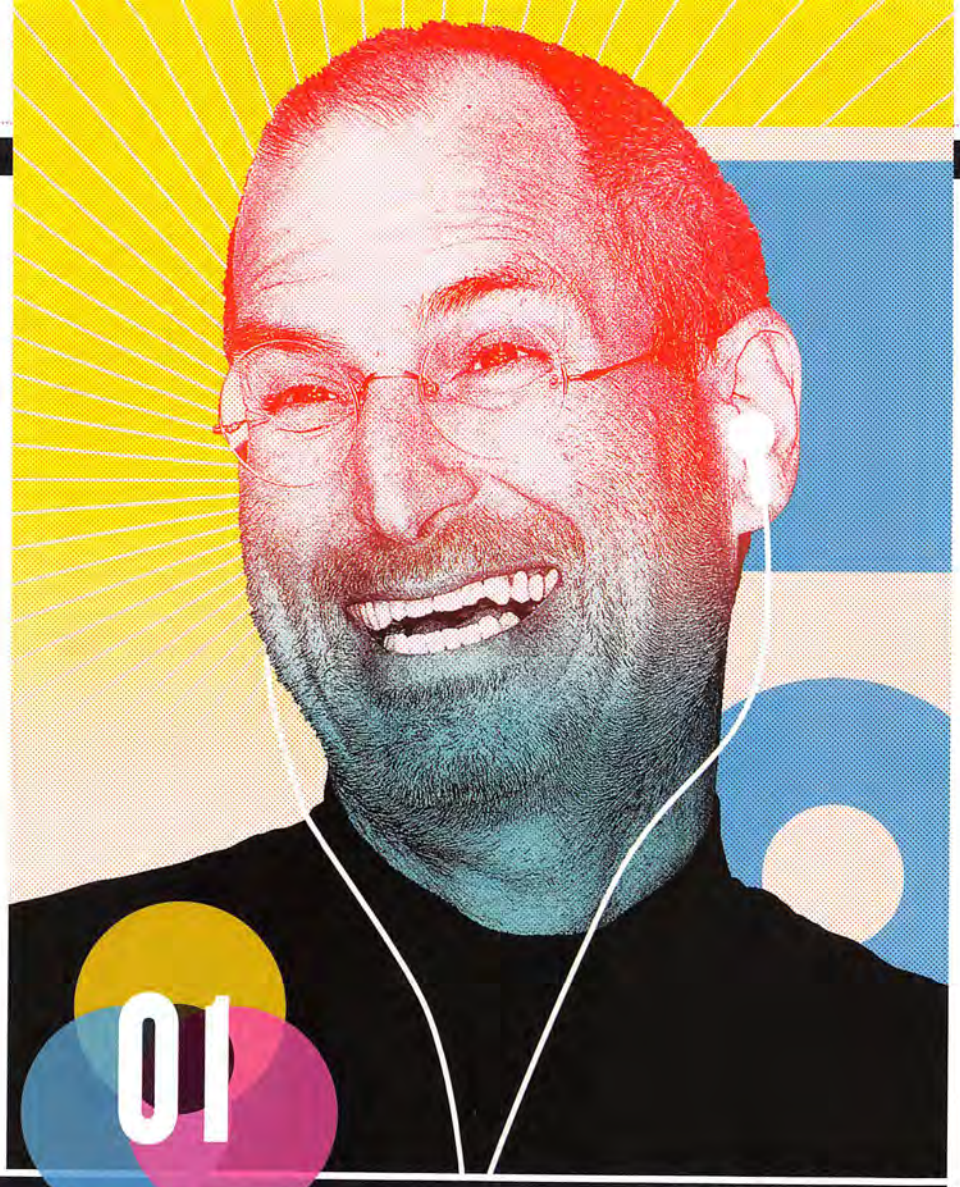
WWW.DIY Launched in 2004, MySpace made good on the Internet's promise to level the music industry's playing field, allowing basement bands to effortlessly share their music, inform fans about tour dates and build an audience online. Just four months after Anderson, 31, and DeWolfe, 41, started the site, Fall Out Boy had a million "friends."

POWER TO THE PEOPLE Other social-networking sites, such as Friendster, banned any profile not of an individual—including, notably, those of bands. Anderson, a musician himself, credits some of his site's early growth to the fact that they allowed bands to self-promote. MySpace would become instrumental in the success of newcomers like Lily Allen, and allowed musicians from Billy Corgan to Travis Barker to vent about their lives.

YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND "Tom"—last name no more necessary than it is for Cher—has become famous as the first "friend" for every user. He also oversees MySpace Records, the company's joint venture with Interscope.

KEEPING IT REAL MySpace, which claims to be the Web's fourth most popular site, was bought for $580 million by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation in July 2005. Through a deal with Snocap, the site now allows musicians to sell MP3s and could represent an important online market if its audience responds.

(02)



01

STEVE JOBS

APPLE

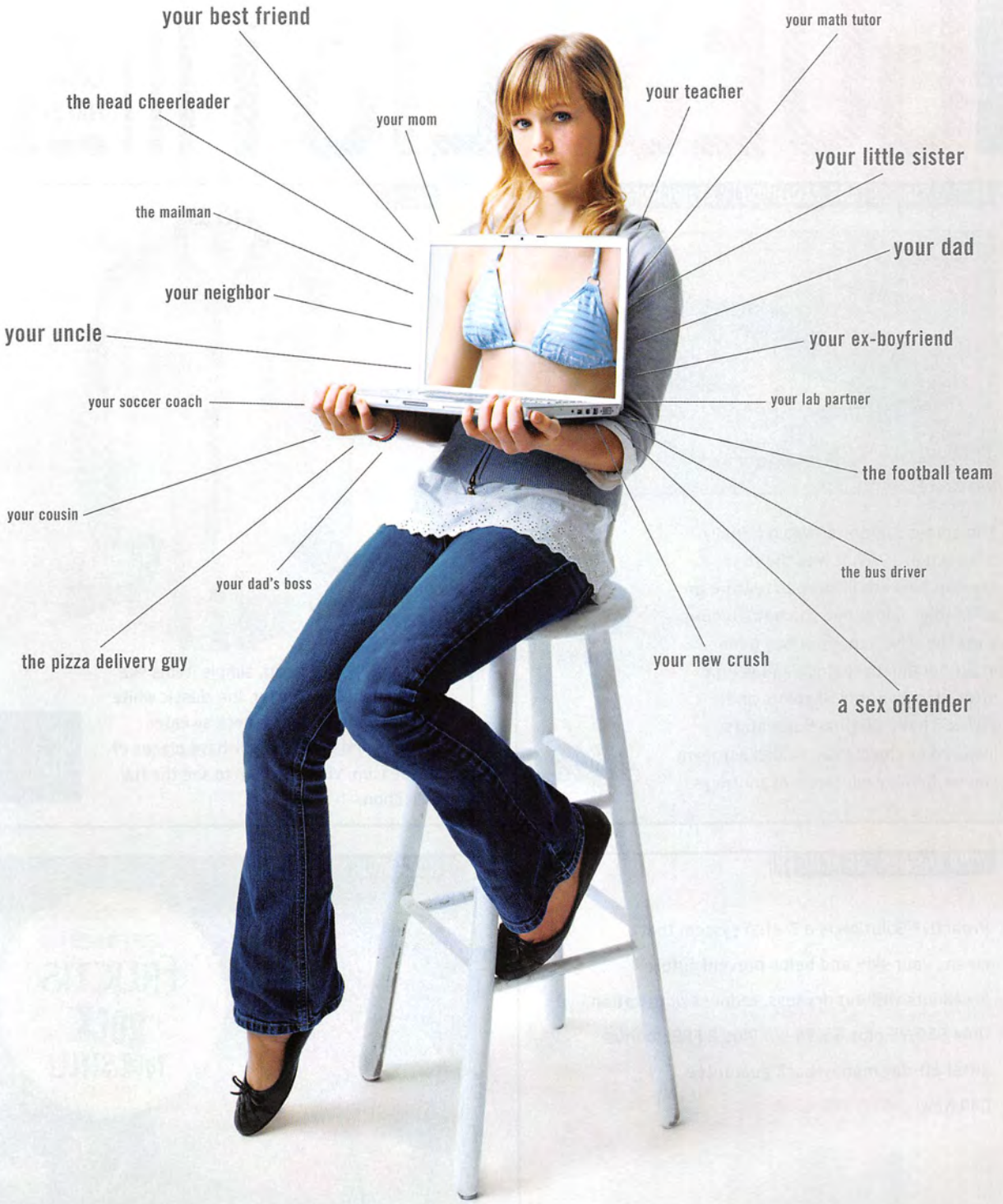
(TECHNOLOGY CORPORATION)

IPLANET Apple CEO Steve Jobs isn't just the most powerful person in Internet music, he's the most powerful person in the music business, period. The iTunes Store and the iPod have done more to change the way people listen to music than anything since the CD, and maybe since the sound recording. As of this April, Apple had sold 100 million iPods and 2.5 billion iTunes songs. And the introduction of the iPhone brings the world one step closer to the "universal jukebox"—all music instantly available everywhere.

THE GADFLY WHO STINGS Apple's brilliant idea was making the process of dealing with digital music fun for its consumers, rather than simply convenient for its producers. The only reason the major labels joined the 21st century by agreeing to sell their catalogues online track by track is that Jobs pushed them into it—blogger Bob Lefsetz calls him "the guy who got everybody else to play along." This spring, Jobs publicly declared his eagerness to sell music without digital-rights management, and EMI promptly became the first major label to get with the program.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION Jobs works for a $1 annual salary—but hold the donations. His $647 million in stock options make him the U.S.'s highest-earning CEO, according to *Forbes*. And that doesn't even include his gratis Gulfstream V Jet.

SWAN SONG Jobs is famously fond of the Beatles, and there are persistent rumbles that the Fab Four's catalogue will soon be on iTunes, ending decades of skirmishes with the other Apple. The word in the industry, though, is that the band iTunes really needs to land is Led Zeppelin.



ANYTHING YOU POST ONLINE, ANYONE CAN SEE. THINK BEFORE YOU POST.

www.cybertipline.com

Ad Council

NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN®

U.S. Department of Justice

Photo by Christian Witkin

GUEST LIST

CONTESTS, EVENTS AND OTHER FUN STUFF WE THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

ADIDAS SUPERSTARS, EXCLUSIVELY AT JOURNEYS

The adidas Superstar was originally released in 1969. It was the first low-top basketball shoe to feature an all-leather upper and the now-famous shell toe. The Superstar has been in production ever since and is now offered in a variety of colors and styles. These Original Superstars, inspired by the classic adidas acronym, can be found exclusively at Journeys.

adidas ORIGINALS

Journeys JOURNEYS.COM

GAP

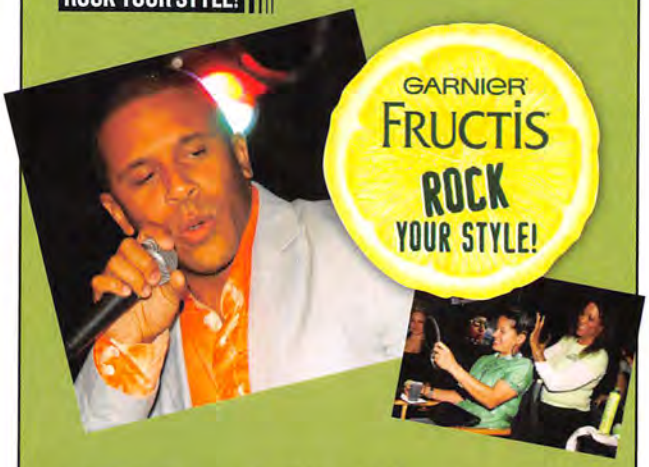
Now at Gap, find great, simple items like the straight-leg trouser, the classic white shirt and the perfect V-neck sweater. Come in and get the must-have pieces of the season. Visit gap.com to see the full collection.

GAP

YOUR ANSWER FOR ACNE

Proactiv® Solution is a 3-step system that cleans your skin and helps prevent future breakouts without dryness, redness or irritation. Only $19.95 plus $5.95 s/h Plus 2 FREE bonus gifts! 60-day money-back guarantee. Call Now! 1-877-678-6780

ROCK YOUR STYLE!



Get ready to Rock Your Style with Garnier Fructis and *Blender*! Garnier Fructis Rock Your Style brings you a unique and exciting music experience. Experience up- and-coming artists and be the first to hear the hottest new music. Right now, garnier.com/rockyourstyle is featuring Notch and his new single, "Rosalinda."

SHOP BOYZ
Do these ATL rookies have any songs besides "Party Like a Rockstar?" *T-t-t-totally, duuuude!*
✪✪✪✪

THE POLICE
They hate each other. They're probably just in it for the dough. But these blondies still rock!
✪✪✪✪

U.N.K.L.E.
... Because the world really needed an hour-long, prog-rock-hip-hop concept album.
✪✪

THE GUIDE

THEY MAKE 'EM. WE REVIEW 'EM

TIP-OFF

The King of Rap stages a royal rumble ... with himself

T.I.

T.I. VS. T.I.P. ✪✪✪

GRAND HUSTLE/ATLANTIC

T.I.'S CAREER HAS been a lesson in the power of self-promotion. Four years ago, he was another modestly successful Atlanta rapper, charming and adequate. Then he started calling himself the King of the South, which seemed ridiculous—until a couple of hot singles justified the title. And when he erased the "South" qualifier and titled his next album *King*, it seemed like routine hip-hop grandiosity. But by the end of 2006, he had the year's top-selling rap album and ruled radio with the year's two best songs (his own smash "What You Know" and Justin Timberlake's "My Love"). At this point, he could pretty much anoint himself Supreme High Commander of the Intergalactic Alliance and few would bat an eye.

Having conquered everyone, the King has no one left to battle but himself. So, turning inward, his fifth album is a showdown between two warring personas: T.I., the suave, savvy businessman with front-row seats at Milan Fashion Week; and his hotheaded alter ego, T.I.P., whose instinct is to reach for a pistol. T.I.P.'s first half of the album is a snarling catalogue of threats, >>

"My right ear is so cold, but my left ear is so hot!"

T.I.: PATRICK HOELCK; SHOP BOYZ: JEREMY COWART; STING: RYAN JACKSON; U.N.K.L.E.: WARREN DU PREEZ & NICK THORNTON JONES.

bare-knuckle boasts and hooder-than-thou proclamations. The second half, starring T.I., celebrates the luxe life, as he flosses in $5,000 suits and pops champagne at his second beach house. Together they represent the bipolar tension between hood and Hollywood—*Jekyll & Hyde*, as directed by John Singleton.

It's an unwieldy concept, and it would be unbearable if T.I. weren't a terrific rapper. He's never dazzled with ingenious metaphors or crowd-pleasing punch lines. His gift is more technical: taut, complex rhymes that sound casual and cool. Chewing his words like a mouthful of Laffy Taffy, he's one of the most captivating MCs around—and at least half this CD proves it. On odes to the good life, like "My Swag" and "Touchdown," T.I. racks up SkyMiles in enough exotic locales to fill a Bond flick and never breaks a sweat. Even when he's firing warning shots at haters on the growly single "Big Shit Poppin' (Do It)," he may as well be ordering a poolside daiquiri.

Then there's T.I.P. As a rapper, he replaces T.I.'s supple drawl with a gruff, clipped bark. It's a fitting approach for the gritty crack fable "Da Dopeman," or "Raw," but it's also less fun. Too often, the piled-up rhymes feel busy and cramped—a bundle of energy with no space to breathe.

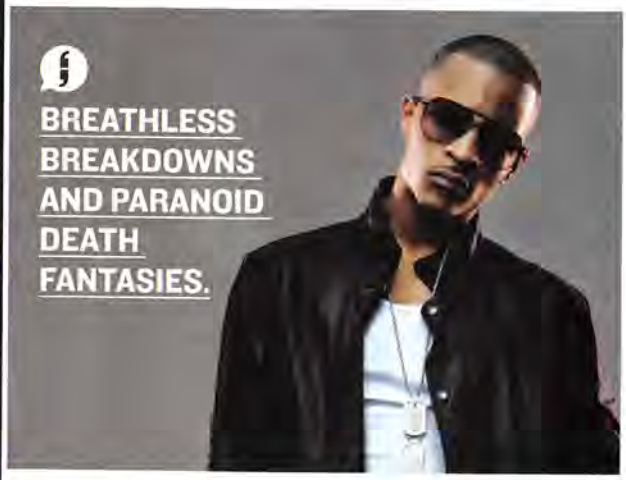
It would help if the conceit were half as novel as T.I. thinks it is. There's another name for a concept album about authenticity, money and fame: a hip-hop record. This internal tug-of-war has been a dilemma for thugs turned moguls at least as far back as the Notorious B.I.G.'s "Mo Money Mo Problems." Boasting about realness in the face of newfound wealth? Congratulations: You're as gangsta as Jenny from the block.

There's a darker, more unusual thread here, which T.I. gets at only obliquely. In the past 14 months, he's been jailed on charges of violating probation, lost a child when his girlfriend miscarried and watched his best friend get shot to death. The most intriguing moments reflect this tumult: breathless breakdowns; paranoid death fantasies; teary apologies to his family. It's the kind of tortured self-awareness rappers are rarely willing, or able, to express—all the more affecting coming from someone who usually sounds bulletproof.

Mostly, though, this psychodrama feels both overplayed and underwritten. The top tier of troubled stars—Eminem, 2Pac, Kurt Cobain—make their private pain public and immediate. T.I. radiates charisma the way a candle gives off light, but he's still not compelling enough to command our attention for 90 minutes of inner conflict. He has a promising sideline as an actor—for his next gig, he costars with Denzel Washington—and *T.I. vs. T.I.P.* should be the role of a lifetime. In a few more years, he might even be ready to play it.

JOSH EELLS

DOWNLOAD: "Big Shit Poppin' (Do It)," "Touchdown"



THE SCORE	
✪✪✪✪	CLASSIC
✪✪✪✪	GREAT
✪✪✪	GOOD
✪✪	MEDIOCRE
✪	FOUL

NICOLE ATKINS

NEPTUNE CITY ✪✪✪

COLUMBIA

Supple-voiced newcomer revives the beholden-to-her-producer bombshell stereotype

With all the feisty and demanding females monopolizing pop these days, it was only a matter of time before passivity made a comeback. Bouffanted and black-eyelinered Jersey Shore native Nicole Atkins has enough compliancy to spin the clock back 40 years. "I'll go anywhere you want, if you take me," she coos, as drums roll, strings swell and bells ring. "I know that I don't know you very well, but you seem cool enough." Producer Tore Johansson (Franz Ferdinand, New Order) takes Atkins at her word, carrying her away on a symphonic wave that combines '50s pop melodrama with the synth-and-guitar edge of '80s club rock. Atkins belts without breaking a sweat, a young Barbra Streisand on Zoloft. Her daredevil voice swoops and somersaults through complicated melodies, but emotionally she's a one-note wonder.

KAREN SCHOEMER

DOWNLOAD: "Party's Over," "Neptune City"

ASTONISHING FACT!
Using his dad's pull as a former pro basketball player, COMMON became the Chicago Bulls ball boy during Michael Jordan's rookie year.

COMMON

FINDING FOREVER ✪✪✪

G.O.O.D./GEFFEN

A good-guy rapper stays positive and clings to relevancy with help from Kanye West

As far back as 1994's *Resurrection*, Common seemed like a peerless talent, thanks to a quick, playful and sometimes lewd tongue—his bursting-metaphor wordplay was nearly unparalleled, and he wasn't above "bonin' the shit out of" a lovely lady. Since then, wholesome good intentions have mostly replaced his wily persona, and he's now a po-faced hip-hop elder statesman who'll claim "I'm like Muhammad when he fasted—opposing the fascists" with a straight face. After producing the lion's share of Com's 2005 artistic and commercial comeback, *Be*, Kanye West once again saves his friend from the NAACP lecture circuit with soul-snapping beats that effectively turn the headliner into a guest star on his own album. Rapping on the juiced-up duet "Southside," West boasts, "I'm Mike and you Tito." He's taunting competitors, but he may as well be talking to Common.

RYAN DOMBAL

DOWNLOAD: "Misunderstood," "Southside"

THE CRIBS

MEN'S NEEDS, WOMEN'S NEEDS, WHATEVER ✪✪✪

WARNER BROS.

Three English brothers parse the mysteries of sex, relationships and '80s indie rock

Nothing shows more awesome cheek than titling an album opener "Our Bovine Public." This band of brothers (literally, not Ramones-ly) bears the lived-in confidence of twins who began gigging at 9 in Yorkshire, England, with their 5-year-old brother on drums. Alex Kapranos of Franz Ferdinand, who produced their third album, does much to enliven the now-twentysomething darlings' mix of Strokes/Rakes/Gang of Four "new rock." Singer-guitarists Ryan and Gary Jarman comport themselves ably through these dozen distortion-cranked, rhapsodically sung bits of power pop, which range from pure euphoria ("Men's Needs") to indie comedy ("I'm a Realist") to off-the-rack Pavement Jr. ("I can't find time for her/Because I'm empty/Because of MTV." Oy). For brats, they're hard to dislike.

CHRIS NORRIS

DOWNLOAD: "Men's Needs," "Our Bovine Public"

FEDERATION

IT'S WHATEVA ✪✪½

REPRISE

Hyphy horndogs make annoying drunks

If Bay Area chambers of commerce have seen a tourism uptick of late, they can thank hyphy. Many rappers broadcast from neighborhoods

T.I.: PATRICK HOELCK.

The Cribs prepare to buy out the 99-cent store.

Gogol Bordello: We're gonna need more Muscle Milk!

most listeners would never dare visit; this rowdy genre advertises a nonstop party where people dance on cars, the sky rains Cuervo and safety helmets are a fashion statement. Fairfield, California, trio Federation are in some ways likable hyphy archetypes: their voices cartoonishly vivid, their beats bright, pneumatic dazzlers. In other ways, they're charmless 2-D goons: too unvaryingly screamy over the 21-track haul, unconvincing in their tough talk and obsessed with blow jobs, an album-spanning motif that quickly turns from goofy ("Tryin'a get a girl to suck me to sleep") to obnoxious ("If you ain't suckin' we ain't doin' nothin'"). Even with a helmet on, it still hurts your head.

JONAH WEINER

DOWNLOAD: "18 Dummy"

GOGOL BORDELLO

SUPER TARANTA! ✪✪✪✪

SIDE ONE DUMMY

Self-described "gypsy punks" call for global good times and more pickled fish

EAST BLOC PARTY

On Gogol Bordello's last album, *Gypsy Punks*, Ukrainian-born, impressively mustachioed frontman Eugene Hutz exhorted listeners to "Think globally, fuck locally." Sounds like something you'd read on the bumper of a VW Microbus. But it also gets to the essence of how this international crew, based in New York, enflames traditional gypsy music with punk, flamenco, dub and whatever else strikes their fancy. They're concerned about global politics, sure, but ultimately (as anyone who's seen their frenetic live shows can attest) they're all about a good party. Actually, the best song on *Super Taranta!* is all about one *bad* party: the disappointed, outright funny "American Wedding" ("Where is the vodka/Where's marinated herring?"). The only misstep is the most overtly political track, "Zina-Marina"—it just feels wrong for a song lamenting Eastern European sex slavery to sound so damn boisterous.

MARK YARM

DOWNLOAD: "American Wedding," "Wonderlust King," "Ultimate"

THE IKE REILLY ASSASSINATION

WE BELONG TO THE STAGGERING EVENING ✪✪✪✪

ROCK RIDGE

Life hates him, he loves it—great songs ensue

It's not easy being rock-legend cocky, especially if nobody's listening. But on his fourth record past a totally ignored 2001 debut packed with insanely catchy, air-punching anthems of American nomadism, hard-luck Illinois rocker Ike Reilly remains admirably arrogant in defeat. The Assassination (an E Street Band kicked to the curb) match the Bruce Springsteen– and Bob Dylan–loving singer-guitarist's mix of wracked and brash. He yells about drunkenly burning down his own home on the Fourth of July, soberly driving past a train depot of Iraq-bound kids and resignedly dating a girl (age unspecified) who lives at home. He gets funnier and prouder the harder life smacks him; so when he squeaks out a win like "Yesterday I smoked/ Today I don't," it's like a baby step to glory.

JON DOLAN

DOWNLOAD: "When Irish Eyes Are Burning," "Broken Parakeet Blues," "It's Hard to Make Love to an American" >>

THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS

THE ELSE

the new album from the original alternative rock band produced by The Dust Brothers, Patrick Dillett and TMBG. TMBG on tour all year. get TMBG's free podcast at tmbg.com

ZOE RECORDS

BEST BUY

CRIBS: JANETTE BECKMAN; GOGOL BORDELLO: LAUREN DUKOFF.

ROHTO EYE DROPS
BATTLE OF THE BANDS
BLENDER

TARAGIRL

HOMETOWN: NEW YORK, NY
SOUNDS LIKE: SOUL AND R&B ANTHEMS, UNDERSCORED WITH A HIP HOP EDGE.
MEMBERS: TARA L. BETTERBID

VOTE
COOL4EYES.COM
LOG ON TO CHECK OUT ALL THE BANDS AND VOTE FOR YOUR FAVORITES

ROHTO

Some glasses shouldn't be made in an hour or less.

LOOSE CHANGE

Austin's finest indie minimalists unwind, ladle out some jams

SPOON

GA GA GA GA GA ✪✪✪

MERGE

NOT ACTUAL UTENSILS

ARE SPOON, INDIE-ROCK'S masters of the fist-tight miniature, secretly a jam band? Not since Elvis Costello has an act made so much of the squirmy intersection of punk and soul, nor done it with such cleverness and thrift. But since their brief dalliance with a major label almost a decade ago, Britt Daniel and Co. have skulked around the fringes of the mainstream, creating ever more impenetrable Mobius strips of wordplay and melody, like the Pixies gone prog.

On their fifth album, Spoon yield more wholly than ever to their anticommercial impulses, largely replacing chiseled minimalism with loose, seductive songs that seem in love with their own grooves. When it works, Daniel seems as if he's torn off his fitted shirt; he even sort of raps on the dublike "Eddie's Ragga," free-associating about stunted romance and ending, as always, with some oblique musings on music making itself ("I'm behind the bass line"). The album begins with a metaphorical explosion of pop strictures: After some textbook Spoon—a sneaking funk of scratchy guitar and white-soul piano, Daniel yelping non sequiturs that sometimes reach a striking clarity ("Don't make me a target!")—the band launches into a stomping, ecstatic riff, pounding it and pounding it until they're satisfied.

The thing about jam bands, though, is that after a while all that shapelessness becomes, well, kind of shapeless. And despite *Ga Ga Ga Ga Ga*'s adventurousness, its highest points end up being the most conventional. In "Finer Feelings," a caustic summer clap-along that is one of the catchiest of Spoon's career, an unhip Memphis kid doing "part-time at the Tasty Prawn" dreams of a life-saving love: "I'll find it in *Commercial Appeal*," he pines. "And then this heartache'll get chased away." It's a double entendre, referring to Memphis's hometown newspaper while expressing Daniel's sneering ambivalence about success. But the joke's on him: It's the tautest pop song here—and the best.

BEN SISARIO

DOWNLOAD: "Finer Feelings," "Don't Make Me a Target"

BRITT DANIEL'S CURRENT LISTENING

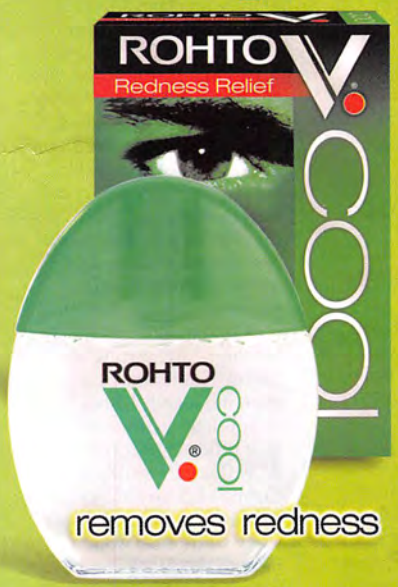
KING TUBBY
KING TUBBY'S IN FINE STYLE *SANCTUARY/TROJAN*

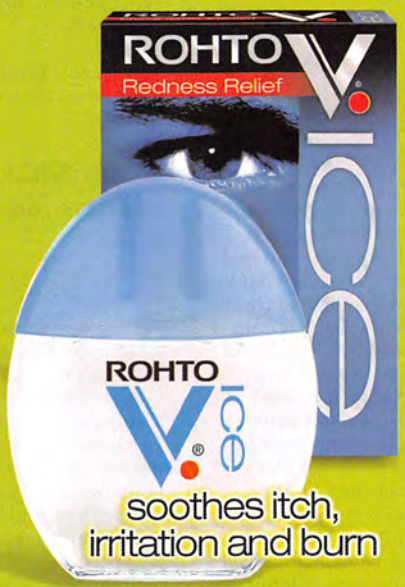
ERIC BACHMANN
TO THE RACES *SADDLE CREEK*

SPOON: AUTUMN DE WILDE.

whatever you did last night..... your eyes won't give it away

experience ROHTO





Cooling, Redness Relief for Eyes

fast, cool, different

cool4eyes.com

Available in the eye drop section of your local retailer.

PALMS
A MALOOF CASINO RESORT
LAS VEGAS NEVADA PALMS.COM

Official Eye Drops of the Palms Casino Resort Las Vegas
www.palms.com

©2006 The Mentholatum Co., Inc.

YELLOWCARD
Paper walls
FEATURING
"LIGHT UP THE SKY"
AVAILABLE EVERYWHERE 07/17/07
Text YCARD1 to 66555 to get your "Light Up The Sky" ringtone*
Myspace.com/yellowcard
www.yellowcardrock.com
Capitol ©2007 Capitol Records, Inc.

Interpol relax after a long day facilitating international police cooperation.

The Magic Numbers: "We should have taken the elevator."

INTERPOL

OUR LOVE TO ADMIRE ✪✪✪

CAPITOL

Hipster pain kings slightly refurbish their torture chamber

BOYS OF BUMMER

It's a special kind of letch who writes a song ragging on his girlfriend for not having a threesome—while claiming the moral high ground. But that's Interpol singer-guitarist Paul Banks, the New York new-wave ghoul whose band reimagined postpunk depressives Joy Division as rakishly sloshed hounds in Italian suits. Banks is at his cornball best on this third album, calling one black-mascara babe a "lioness" with an excess of "pride," but he often moans his heart-heavy come-ons over gaping canyons of luminous atmospherics and textured pomp, rather than the shimmery drones and blood-rush bash that make Interpol's best songs sizzle. In fleshing out the contours of a sound once slavishly indebted to early-'80s titans like JD and the Smiths, they've nuanced the moods Banks moons over. Awesome for him. Only so-so for us.

JON DOLAN

DOWNLOAD: "The Heinrich Maneuver," "No I in Threesome"

JASON ISBELL

SIRENS OF THE DITCH ✪✪✪½

NEW WEST

Drive-By Trucker goes solo, quiets down, stays bleak

For five years or so, Jason Isbell rode shotgun with Patterson Hood and Mike Cooley in the highbrow Southern-rock outfit Drive-By Truckers—the third of three badass, existentially addled guitarist-songwriters. And his first solo record after his recent (reportedly amicable) split with the band is, unsurprisingly, highbrow Southern rock, played with most of his ex-bandmates, among them wife Shonna Tucker. Isbell's songs were always a bit more refined than those of his fellow redneck-noirists, and that's even truer here: The Truckers would've crushed delicate stuff like "In a Razor Town." It's all top-shelf alt-country: road-hardened, literate and dark as ever. If his old crew's bare-knuckled triple-guitar buzz is missing, at least they've gained a solid opening act.

WILL HERMES

DOWNLOAD: "Chicago Promenade," "Shotgun Wedding"

KENNA

MAKE SURE THEY SEE MY FACE ✪✪✪½

STAR TRAK/INTERSCOPE

Depeche Mode fixation + Southern hip-hop = this oddball

An African-American R&B artist who is produced by Chad from the Neptunes, sounds like a British new-wave romantic and samples the voice of *The New Yorker* writer Malcolm Gladwell: Virginia Beach native Kenna Zemedkun is so proudly strange, it almost obscures how needy he is. This follow-up to 2003's wildly ignored *New Sacred Cow* mixes up his two favorite sounds—overwrought '80s Anglo-rock and quaking Virginia hip-hop—suggesting a goth Justin Timberlake in one spot and a gully Thom Yorke later on. Stylistic confusion is his engine, but every flaky flourish is siphoned through his love-deprived, world-sick croon. He's like a guy who gets a woman back to the Jacuzzi so he can read her his favorite Sylvia Plath poems. And she kinda likes it.

JON DOLAN

DOWNLOAD: "Out of Control (State of Emotion)," "Better Wise Up"

INTERPOL: JELLE WAGENAAR; MAGIC NUMBERS: COURTESY OF PRESS HERE PUBLICITY.

THE MAGIC NUMBERS

THOSE THE BROKES ✪✪½

CAPITOL

Unabashed British hippies make a classic hippie mistake: going on for too long

Long-haired and full of denim, the Magic Numbers aren't retro hippies just in their look: The sensibility defines their sound, too. Their jones for vintage '60s pop, an obsession that elevated their often exquisite 2005 debut, manifests itself even more strongly here. Waltzing string sections, winsome melodies and cozy male-female vocal interplay overrun even the galloping tracks. Unfortunately, the Magic Numbers overplay most of those touches—the arrangements and singer-guitarist Romeo Stodart's delivery both veer toward the cloying. The band also seems to have forgotten the art of brevity, resulting in too many songs that drag on past the five-minute mark. More power to the Magic Numbers for believing pop should be uplifting, but sometimes a short blast is much better than a long, slow breeze.

DAVID BROWNE

DOWNLOAD: "Runnin' Out"

MAPS

WE CAN CREATE ✪✪✪

MUTE

Bedroom boffin makes spaced-out electronica for mood-enhanced stargazers

Like most daydreamers with more ambition than resources, James Chapman, the synth savant behind Maps, thinks big. Unlike most one-man shoestring operations, though, he also sounds big. His debut album was recorded at home in suburban England, but on these whispered, layered reveries, Chapman's head is up in the clouds, or off in some faraway galaxy. For better and worse, he covers the space-rock bases, combining the druggy drone of Spacemen 3 with the dazed wonderment of the Flaming Lips and occasionally—as on the new agey "Don't Fear"—the dopey cult-follower vibe of the Polyphonic Spree. Enchanting in small doses, Chapman ultimately suffers from an unvarying insistence on wide-eyed uplift. This mood piece could have benefitted from a few more mood swings.

DENNIS LIM

DOWNLOAD: "It Will Find You," "Elouise"

1990s hide from their evil nemesis, Y2K.

THE CD WE'RE TOTALLY GAY FOR

1990s

COOKIES ✪✪✪✪

ROUGH TRADE

Dweeby Scotsmen play rock gods—convincingly!

Making "sexy" indie rock is easy when you've got great bone structure and look smashing in stovepipe jeans. But we can't all be Franz Ferdinand. Certainly not their fellow Glaswegians 1990s, fugly Franz-friends who transcend their limitations by heroically strutting it "like a blonde gets out of a car." Singer-guitarist Jackie McKeown talks cocky about drugs, weird hotel antics and his babe-magnet cult status through some of the worst teeth in English-rock history, adding unlikely swagger to bubbly new-wave tunes built on stick-figure riffs and drunk disco beats. It works: The goofy optimism suggests a Saturday-morning-cartoon band from the '60s, not a geek-chic one from the '90s. They have so much fun playing hot rock stars, it's almost better than the real thing.

JON DOLAN

DOWNLOAD: "See You at the Lights," "Cult Status," "Enjoying Myself"

MASERATI

INVENTIONS FOR THE NEW SEASON ✪✪✪½

TEMPORARY RESIDENCE LTD.

Vocal-free Georgia band strikes gold with second album of transcendent guitar glory

Maserati have esoteric inspirations and lofty aspirations. Originally from Athens, Georgia, but now scattered across the country, this instrumental quartet cite '70s cosmic rock from Germany as the model for their iridescent guitars and precisely calibrated hypno-rhythms. What they actually sound like, though, is as non-obscure as imaginable—the world-conquering U2 of *The Joshua Tree*. The glittering rush and pummel of nine-minute opener "Inventions" recalls nothing so much as VH1 perennial "Where the Streets Have No Name"—minus a large-voiced Irishman bellowing over the top, of course. Songs like "This Is a Sight We Had One Day From the High Mountain" evoke wide-screen emotions: The soaring of the human spirit faced by the majesty of Nature, that sort of thing. All this grandeur and emotional uplift can get overbearing, even slightly wearing—like you've lingered an hour too long at the Grand Canyon. But mostly, Maserati blow away the cobwebs like a top-down surge on a deserted freeway.

SIMON REYNOLDS

DOWNLOAD: "Inventions," "Synchronicity IV"

I LOVE THIS CD!

ASHLEY SCOTT

SHE WANTS REVENGE
SHE WANTS REVENGE
PERFECT KISS/FLAWLESS/GEFFEN

"It's romantic, passionate and kind of creepy all at once. Plus, I like guys who have the balls to wear eyeliner."

WHEN I ZAPPOS, I FEEL WARM AND FUZZY.

Check out our outstanding service and massive selection of shoes and apparel and you'll Zappos, too.

- Free shipping both ways
- Piece o'cake return policy
- Millions of shoes

Zappos.com
POWERED by SERVICE™
See www.zappos.com/cs.zhtml for details.

1990S: ROGER SARGENT; SCOTT: KEVIN PARRY/WIREIMAGE.

MEAT PUPPETS

RISE TO YOUR KNEES ✪✪✪

ANODYNE

Twenty years past its heyday, Arizona-born band returns with desert weirdness intact

Meat Puppets are back from the brink: A newly sober Cris Kirkwood, who in the last decade went to jail and lost his wife to a drug overdose, has rejoined on bass, and basement-virtuoso guitarist Curt Kirkwood has written a gorgeous album that channels his brother's world-weary relief. Recorded with a new drummer, the songs feel like an outpouring of fraternal instinct—and unearthed pain. There are shades of the psychedelic country-punk hybrid the group invented in the '80s, but each track offers a new texture, whether it's a banjo riff, reggae rhythm or spacey keyboard layer. Curt, meanwhile, plies a rich metaphysical rut, pondering life at the mercy of fate. Never, though, do you sense that he feels alone.

NICK CATUCCI

DOWNLOAD: "Radio Moth," "Tiny Kingdom"

BRAD PAISLEY

5TH GEAR ✪✪✪✪½

ARISTA NASHVILLE

On this corking new album, the Nashville star has jokes, riffs—and balls

If Brad Paisley weren't a country superstar, he could be a comedian. Of course, the great thing about being a country superstar is that you can also be a comedian. Nashville has always welcomed punch-line-packed novelty tunes, and Paisley's well-nigh-perfect new album will deepen his reputation as a master of the art. There's "Online," in which a five-foot-three "sci-fi fanatic, mild asthmatic" passes himself off as a stud to wrangle cybersex threesomes; there's "I'm Still a Guy," which disses metrosexuals in an instant-classic couplet: "I don't highlight my hair/I've still got a pair." The songs come wrapped in perfectly shaped hooks, impressively quirky arrangements (check the marching-band coda to "Online") and burly riffs from Paisley, a virtuoso guitarist. He does earnestness—the usual country odes to family and piety—as expertly as he does yuks. Even better: He combines the two. "All I Wanted Was a Car" begins as a trifle about a teen's first set of wheels, but climaxes with an epiphany about domestic contentment, with Paisley marveling that his old junker ride wound up taking him "this far"—a cosmic joke with a happy ending.

JODY ROSEN

DOWNLOAD: "All I Wanted Was a Car," "Mr. Policeman," "If Love Was a Plane"

THE CD WE DIDN'T EVEN UNWRAP

MARK RONSON

VERSION ✪✪½

RCA

Celebrity DJ mixes cool singers with recent pop hits, but his mash-up skips

How cool is Mark Ronson? He's the go-to DJ for the international fashion glitterati. He's produced records for hipster It girls Lily Allen and Amy Winehouse. Jay-Z calls him "a nice nigga." And now he's the creator of a soul-jazz reworking of the song "L.S.F.," by rocktronica lunks Kasabian! Actually, that's *not* cool; if nothing else, Ronson gets chutzpah points for this breathtakingly gauche project, a collection of funk-lite covers of (mostly) Britpop tunes. The problem isn't just the aesthetic (cheesy fake Stax horns and breaks) or the song choices (does the world really need a Zutons cover?), but the banality of the idea: At a time when every geek with a Casio is busy YouTubing his "ironic" version of this week's No. 1, the novelty appeal of a soul-style Smiths cover is next to nil. Worse,

most tracks don't even work as dance-floor movers—they sound like the stuff a Ronson wannabee would spin at a D-list afterparty.

JODY ROSEN

DOWNLOAD: "God Put a Smile Upon Your Face"

ULRICH SCHNAUSS

GOODBYE ✪✪✪½

DOMINO

German electronica whiz gazes at his shoes until they melt

In 2003, Ulrich Schnauss won a cult following by wedding pop electronica with the dream rock of '90s shoegazers like Slowdive and Ride. He took three years to produce this follow-up, and the labor shows, for good and ill. If Phil Spector made a Wall of Sound, Schnauss constructs entire cityscapes, layering so many instruments and voices—up to 100 tracks for a single piece—that the gorgeous, gauzy mass threatens to swallow the songs. And sometimes it does: "A Song About Hope" sounds like five different mixes of the same tune playing at the same time. His peaks are epic, but with all this delirious haze, the beats can wind up dinky, like model trains clicking through a room stuffed with cotton candy: sweet, fuzzy and low-impact.

ERIK DAVIS

DOWNLOAD: "Stars," "A Song About Hope"

Meat Puppets: Man, Ralph Macchio got old.

Shop Boyz: Not often confused with Pet Shop Boys.

ASTONISHING FACT!

Before their recording career took off, **TEGAN AND SARA** went by Sara and Tegan until someone told them that it sounded too plain.

SHOP BOYZ

ROCKSTAR MENTALITY ✪✪✪✪

ONDECK/UNIVERSAL REPUBLIC

Trio's debut makes Atlanta sound like Southern California. Totally, dude!

Sheed, Meany and Fat might be the blithest dudes in today's balmy, carefree rap climate. Claiming "cowabunga" and hotel-trashing for hip-hop, their boisterous, guitar-riff-driven smash "Party Like a Rockstar" wears its novelty status like a propeller cap. But it's no fluke: Most of the songs here are fresh, catchy and loads of fun. Shop Boyz take the rule of the Dirty South—fly your freak flag, but keep the dance floor bumping—to its logical conclusion. And while they might not be OutKast-style avant-gardists, their crunk-meets-guitar combos are exhilarating, not experimental, and their rhymes evoke the old school—the Travis Barker shout-outs (not to mention the pitch-perfect, featherweight Beach Boys homage, "Rollin'") defy rap's usual notions of authenticity. They're the closest thing we've got to rock rebels.

NICK CATUCCI

DOWNLOAD: "Party Like a Rockstar," "Totally Dude," "Rollin'"

TEGAN AND SARA

THE CON ✪✪✪✪

SANCTUARY

Twins! Lesbians! Nuanced articulators of profound self-doubt!

Tegan and Sara are a lot of things most singer-songwriter duos aren't: identical twin >>

MEAT PUPPETS: JOSEPH CULTICE; SHOP BOYZ: JEREMY COWART.

DEEP CLASSIC ROCK	CH.40
'80s HARD ROCK	CH.41
HEAVY METAL	CH.42
INDIE/COLLEGE/UNSIGNED	CH.43
CLASSIC ALTERNATIVE	CH.44
ADULT ALBUM ROCK	CH.45
EARLY CLASSIC ROCK	CH.46
NEW ALTERNATIVE ROCK	CH.47
NEW HARD ROCK	CH.48
LATER CLASSIC ROCK	CH.49
ACOUSTIC ROCK	CH.50
EMERGING ARTISTS	CH.52
PUNK/HARDCORE/SKA	CH.53
'90s ALTERNATIVE ROCK	CH.54

HEADBANG 'TIL YOUR BRAINS FALL OUT.
170 CHANNELS TO FIND WHAT TURNS YOU ON.

((XM)) ARE YOU ON?

xmradio.com

They Might Be Giants: "This witness-relocation program blows."

Tegan and Sara: Powerless against stubborn grass stains.

sisters, lesbians, Canadians. But they're even more special on the inside. The chirpy Quin girls write deceptively cute, deeply worried songs about love's anxious moments—romance is an inferno, a knife, a blurry blueprint and a con they're endlessly suckered into. On 2004's excellent *So Jealous*, Go-Go's-worthy pep made the scary stuff feel sunny, but with Christopher Walla of genteel pain-strummers Death Cab for Cutie producing here, their frayed nerves dangle more freely, especially on the plaintive acoustic songs that make the moments of sheepish, shouty rock catharsis more heroic. They might sound like Girl Scouts, but these are two tough cookies.

JON DOLAN

DOWNLOAD: "Nineteen," "Call It Off," "The Con"

THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS

THE ELSE ✪✪✪

IDLEWILD/ZOE/UNIVERSAL

Long-running duo, known to *The Daily Show* viewers, finally shows angry side

You can take They Might Be Giants out of the rec room, but you can't take the rec room out of They Might Be Giants. Two years after *Here Come the ABCs*, their record for toddlers, alt-rock's nasal troubadours of semi-clever schoolboy whimsy have made an ostensibly "adult" album, with fuzz-and-hand-claps production by the Dust Brothers giving a kick to surprisingly angry songs about depression and girls with bad boyfriends. For the bilious "Take Out the Trash," they pointedly do away with the accordion, and bring in some mean guitars. They can't resist the pull of the cutesy, though, and while yet another geography gimmick song ("The Mesopotamians") might try the patience of anyone older than 8, goofiness also inspires them. In the harmony-rich and irresistible "The Cap'm," a shameless dork wins over a woman with a line that could work on her daughter, too: "Look me over, I'm the cap'm/Go ahead and mess with me—you'll find out what will hap'm."

BEN SISARIO

DOWNLOAD: "The Cap'm," "Take Out the Trash"

THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS: MARCEL DZAMA; TEGAN AND SARA: AUTUMN DE WILDE.

Blender Approved.

Kooks
Inside In/Inside Out

Ryan Adams
Easy Tiger

Cinder Road
Superhuman

Chemical Brothers
We Are The Night

Marc Broussard
S.O.S.: Save Our Soul

Tomahawk
Anonymous

Interpol
Our Love To Admire

They Might Be Giants
Else

U.N.K.L.E.

WAR STORIES ✪✪

SURRENDER ALL

DJ presents tales from soporific oceans

The vehicle for fabulously well-connected London DJ James Lavelle and his American counterpart DJ Shadow, U.N.K.L.E. was one of Lavelle's pursuits, along with curating graffiti artists and collecting Japanese action figures. But Shadow departed, and Lavelle's increasingly overblown music has arrived at its inevitable destination: a turgid modern, progressive rock with a superficial hip-hop sheen. Rambling, mired in sludgy guitar and spectacularly joyless, these songs' trite, received notion of rock & roll is best encapsulated by the K-Mart Jim Morrison vocals of Ian Astbury of the Cult. Further cameos from Josh Homme (Queens of the Stone Age) and 3D (Massive Attack) don't alleviate a frosty and dispiriting hour that makes *cool* sound no fun whatsoever.

ANDREW HARRISON

DOWNLOAD: "Chemistry"

JENNY OWEN YOUNGS

BATTEN THE HATCHES ✪✪✪✪

NETTWERK

N.J. girl has issues, very nice melodies

Jenny Owen Youngs hates herself, hates her friends, hates love. One of the many pretty songs on her debut observes, "Everything I touch turns to shit." Her searching acoustic guitar, crazy-lady confessions and orchestral accompaniment might flirt with freak folk if not for her tough-dame spunk—like Mary-Louise Parker in *Weeds*, with a touch of Kate Hepburn in *Bringing Up Baby*. She compares falling in love to fighting a tumor, tells her boyfriend, "Your body makes me sick" right before they have sex and drinks like a depressed sailor. She beats herself up so the world can't have the satisfaction of knocking her out first.

JON DOLAN

DOWNLOAD: "Fuck Was I," "Porchrail," "Coyote"

READ THOUSANDS OF REVIEWS AND MORE AT BLENDER.COM.

BLENDER APPROVED

The best releases from the past months

KELLY CLARKSON

MY DECEMBER

RCA

The *Blender* cover girl relives some nasty breakups, 13 songs straight. Bleak—and gripping.

THE WHITE STRIPES

ICKY THUMP

THIRD MAN/WARNER BROS.

Dr. Seuss meets Jimmy Page as Jack White returns to guitar and gets goofier than ever.

JUSTICE

†

ED BANGER/BECAUSE/VICE

Grab your ironic T-shirt and put on your white dancing shoes—it's party time at le hipster disco!

R. KELLY

DOUBLE UP

JIVE

The 40-year-old anti-virgin is back, reborn as—parental advisory alert!—"the Sexasaurus."

© 2007 Best Buy. All Rights Reserved. Best Buy, the Best Buy logo and the tag design are trademarks of Best Buy Enterprise Services, Inc.

Best Buy™ Supplied.

You know Blender is the place to go to get recommendations on the latest CDs. Now Best Buy is the first place to go to get them. Look for our Blender Approved section in store and online every month, so you can easily find all the great new CDs you really should hear.

Visit any Best Buy store or go to BestBuy.com/blenderstore

BLENDER [APPROVED]

BEST BUY

32541

OFF THE CHAIN

Rap's troubled chart-topper piles up his hits (BY NICK CATUCCI)

DMX

THE DEFINITION OF X: PICK OF THE LITTER ✪✪✪½

DEF JAM

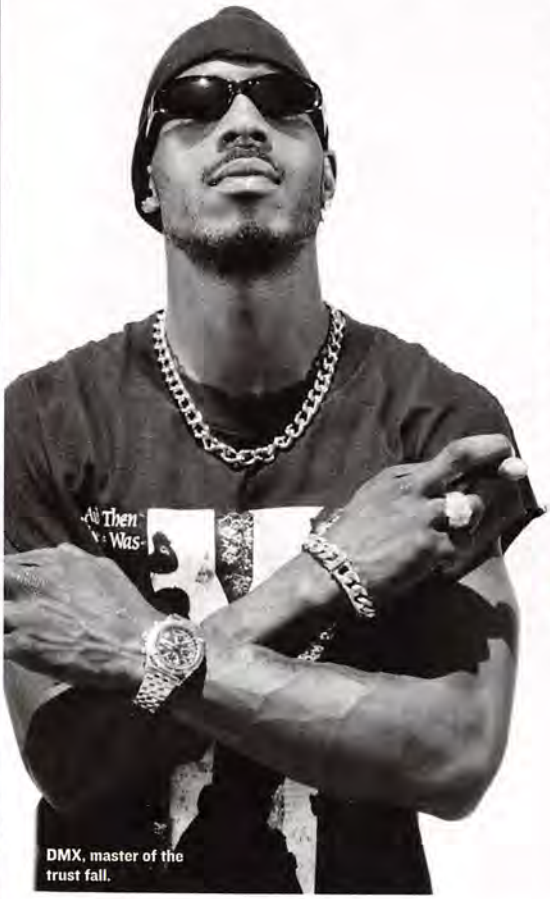
IF RAP'S A game, DMX has won. Five of his albums debuted consecutively at No. 1. ... *And Then There Was X* sold 5 million copies. Two of his movies also opened at No. 1, including *Exit Wounds*, which costarred Steven Seagal. DMX could take his marbles—what's left of them, anyhow—and go home. And in his own way, he has. Rather than ascending to CEO status or becoming a hip-hop statesman, like other rappers his age, X only leaves the house, it seems, in order to get arrested.

In other words, it's best-of time. DMX's rage makes his music ultra-intense, but it's not exactly conducive to growth. If he has management savvy, he has devoted it to raising his pit bulls in upstate New York, and with his *rat-tat-tat* vocals and outsize presence, he can hijack a track even if he meant to contribute a friendly guest verse. (He even amped up the LOX's "Blackout," included here, after a hard-edged run from Jay-Z.)

While this singles-and-key-tracks compilation can sound quaintly earnest compared to the bright-and-breezy club tracks and coke rap in current rotation, it's sometimes oddly buoyant, and even deep. His hits pop right out of the speakers. The best songs bounce like they're on bedsprings, and the choruses are nothing less than rallying cries. (Producer Swizz Beatz got his start with DMX.) Even leaving aside his voice, which cuts through the mix like a buzz saw, X's rhymes are often vivid and economical. "Who We Be" eschews sentences entirely for strings of words—"snitches," "probation," "stabbing," "the hole"—that neatly detail ghetto life, a prison bid, finding God or family without sounding like the same old story.

But radio hits only sell so many albums. People also snatched up these records to try and decode the man behind the bubblegum bark. Rappers trade on ego: DMX is a full-fledged narcissist with a free-floating moral center. Is he a misogynist? In "What These Bitches Want," he simply seems baffled by women, reeling off names (Brenda, Latisha, Linda, Felicia) as if he can't think of what else to say. Is he gangsta? "Here We Go Again" ostensibly concerns his murder of a protégé, but it's a stew of resentment, paranoia and regret. And when the rapper talks to God, as he's known for doing, he's not so much praying as bro'-ing down with the Almighty. (Take that, Hova.) Like listeners, DMX keeps struggling to understand himself.

Download: "Who We Be," "Party Up (Up in Here)," "What's My Name?"



DMX, master of the trust fall.

< THE SCORE >	
✪✪✪✪✪	CLASSIC
✪✪✪✪	GREAT
✪✪✪	GOOD
✪✪	MEDIOCRE
✪	FOUL

THE BONGOS

DRUMS ALONG THE HUDSON ✪✪✪✪

COOKING VINYL

Forgotten New Jersey band won over urban trendsetters with bursts of youthful pep

As cultural movements go, the "Hoboken sound" of 1982 ranks somewhere below the March on Washington of 1963 and above the Hampsterdance craze of 1998. The Bongos—a compelling trio led by Richard Barone, who looked like a chipmunk with an uncanny resemblance to Paul McCartney—took the jittery *we're playing too fast for our hands* pulse of new wave and added an uncanny sense of invention, starting with filtered guitars, hand claps and shortwave keyboard squiggles. The songs are brief but packed. Splitting the difference between nervous and joyful, Barone sang innocently about risk and adventure, in a nightclub or in the jungle, using elusive bits of dialogue: "Can you guess what we are?" is a typical turn of phrase, though helpfully, it's also another in a 37-minute relay race of energized hooks. The dozen bonus cuts—live '79, live '81, '07 remake—add nothing but length.

ROB TANNENBAUM

DOWNLOAD: "Telephoto Lens," "Hunting"

GARBAGE

ABSOLUTE GARBAGE ✪✪✪

ALMO/GEFFEN/UME

Since debuting in 1995, these technology specialists have sung about masochism, medication and misery

Garbage have always been a better idea than a band. Granted, a great idea: three ace Midwestern gearheads backing a black-vinyl-clad Scottish fembot, with songs that blend pop hooks with all the tech-noir ambience drummer-super-producer Butch Vig can wring from his Pro Tools. There's no denying the catchiness and

HYPE WILLIAMS/CORBIS OUTLINE.

sheen of hits like the discofied rock stomper "Stupid Girl" and the James Bond movie ballad "The World Is Not Enough." The problem is emotion, or lack thereof. Garbage is all form, no feeling, with every guitar scrawl and keyboard blurt rather too perfectly vacuum-sealed in place. And while singer Shirley Manson looks terrific in smeared eyeliner and black lipstick, she's too mannered to pull off her angsty femme fatale act—which is as much of a digital effect, ultimately, as anything Vig ever dialed up at the mixing desk. The bonus disc of dance remixes merely piles another layer of fastidiousness atop the already epically fussed-over tracks.

JODY ROSEN

DOWNLOAD: "Vow," "Queer"

PRETENDERS

LEARNING TO CRAWL ✪✪✪✪½

GET CLOSE ✪✪✪

RHINO/WARNER BROS.

After two band deaths, a top songwriter examines motherhood and loss with humor and yearning

Losing her original guitarist James Honeyman-Scott and bassist/boyfriend Pete Farndon to heroin, and then the morgue, might have finished weaker vessels than Chrissie Hynde. But there are songs on her third and fourth albums that show the Ohio-born singer at her frankest and best. *Learning to Crawl* (1984) has the crisp soul-pop of "Back on the Chain Gang," the delicious quiver of "Thin Line Between Love and Hate" and determined rock riffs right up until the bonus tracks start. The more dated *Get Close* (1986)—with failed bids at funk, and Jimmy Iovine and Bob Clearmountain busting a production gut—includes the wry, effortless "Don't Get Me Wrong" and the beautiful "Hymn to Her." But "How Much Did You Get for Your Soul?" unveils the self-righteous scold that would become her persona for the next several years.

TONY POWER

DOWNLOAD: "Back on the Chain Gang," "Thin Line Between Love and Hate," "2000 Miles"

SOCIAL DISTORTION

GREATEST HITS ✪✪✪

TIME BOMB

Green Day's punk-rock uncles look back on 30 years of drugs and disappointment

Born during punk's late-'70s first wave, Social Distortion endured personnel changes and frontman Mike Ness's heroin addiction before finally finding success in the punk revival of the early '90s. But as *Greatest Hits* illustrates, Social D never stopped obsessing about failure; they evoke the dark shadows cast by Southern California's endless sunshine, with terse melodies that bridge the generational divide between the Clash's switchblade precision and blink-182's suburban ennui. Drawing on Johnny Cash and rockabilly influences for modern-rock staples like "Story of My Life," Ness broadened punk's defiant antihero image, singing about thoughtful, messed-up greasers who were more closely akin to the luckless losers populating country songs. This compilation's career-spanning ambitions result in some flabby early-era selections, but the finest cuts renew the rock tradition of transforming bitterness into a few fleeting moments of glory.

TIM GRIERSON

DOWNLOAD: "Story of My Life," "I Was Wrong"

Pretenders: Not pretending to care, apparently.

Garbage's Shirley Manson: "Is that spinach gone from my teeth?"

THE TRAVELING WILBURYS

THE TRAVELING WILBURYS COLLECTION ✪✪✪✪

WILBURY/RHINO

The mightiest of all rock supergroups, maximized with bonus tracks and a DVD

Three crusty horndogs, an unswerving romantic and a studio geek, sitting around a California kitchen in 1988, strumming guitars and trading rhymes—that was the start of the Traveling Wilburys. The horndogs were George Harrison, Bob Dylan and their mutual disciple Tom Petty; the romantic was the rockabilly with the ardent tenor, Roy Orbison; while Jeff (E.L.O.) Lynne stood ready to polish things up. These stars stayed loose without getting lazy, sharing songs that shift from punch lines to heartaches, tall tales to sweet nothings. Harrison conceived the band and the overall sound—'50s guitar riffs bolstered by saxophones—but the songs were full collaborations. Dylan free-associated some of his best yarns of the 1980s, Petty deadpanned a few zingers, and vows of sweet yearning were assigned to Orbison's aching, soaring voice. That was *Volume 1*; after Orbison died the same year, the four Wilburys reconvened for a finale, which was jokier and more brittle. Still, through songs about betrayal, thwarted love and aging, they cackled like old pals who just didn't care that they had reputations to protect.

JON PARELES

DOWNLOAD: "End of the Line," "Not Alone Any More"

VARIOUS ARTISTS

BOKOOR BEATS ✪✪✪½

OTRABANDA

Afropop from a musicologist whose band once threw pythons at a crowd

Few academics can claim the field experience of John Collins. The son of a British philosophy professor in Accra, Ghana, Collins cofounded the Bokoor (or "Coolness") band there in 1971 and later recorded some 200 other acts in his family's barn studio. The best of the eight late-'70s Bokoor tracks on this compilation deliver Afropop with funk and swagger, ranging from the Fela Kuti–inspired Afrobeat drive of "Maya Gari" to the swinging soukous of "Money in Bed." But while Collins had a knack for translating Western pop hooks into Afro-rock settings, his harmonica playing was a less rewarding import. As for the non-Bokoor tracks, a stuttering organ and bouncing bass make the Mangwana Stars' "Atiadele" ("Deceiver") the standout.

RICHARD GEHR

DOWNLOAD: "Yeah Yeah Ku Yeah," "Atiadele"

BLENDER APPROVED

The best reissues from the past months

SONIC YOUTH

DAYDREAM NATION

GEFFEN

In 1988, brain-scrambling noise and hum-along hooks made sweet love, thanks to New York's experimental pacesetters.

BLONDIE

EAT TO THE BEAT

CAPITOL/EMI

They followed the breakthrough *Parallel Lines* with this exuberant new wave LP, colored with disco, punk, reggae and many hits.

> READ THOUSANDS OF REVIEWS AND MORE AT BLENDER.COM.

PRETENDERS: SIMON FOWLER/COURTESY OF SIRE RECORDS; GARBAGE: FRANK W. OCKENFELS 3/CORBIS OUTLINE.

DOWNLOAD 2007

THE ULTIMATE INTERACTIVE MUSIC FESTIVAL

AUGUST 18
TWEETER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
MANSFIELD, MA

MODEST MOUSE
GUSTER
YEAH YEAH YEAHS
NIEKO CASE
WOLF PARADE
BAND OF HORSES

AUGUST 25
THE GORGE AMPHITHEATRE
GEORGE, WA

MODEST MOUSE
INCUBUS
THE PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NADA SURF
THE THERMALS
ARTHUR & YU
THE HEAVENLY STATES

SEPTEMBER 2
ALPINE VALLEY MUSIC THEATRE
EAST TROY, WI

THE SHINS
BRAND NEW
BAND OF HORSES
WOLF PARADE
HONEYCUT

OCTOBER 6
SHORELINE AMPHITHEATRE
MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA

THE CURE
A.F.I.
KINGS OF LEON
BLACK REBEL MOTORCYCLE CLUB
SHE WANTS REVENGE
METRIC
65DAYS-OFSTATIC

AND MUCH, MUCH MORE...

DETAILS AT
DOWNLOADFESTIVAL.COM

BUY AT LIVENATION.com

adidas CHAMPS nowwhat.com W HOTELS BURNLOUNGE ARE YOU A CARDMEMBER?

ARETHA FRANKLIN PART 2: THE '70S TO THE PRESENT

In the late '60s she became a star. Then she showed how much her voice could bend without shattering (BY DOUGLAS WOLK)

EVERY ORIGINAL ALBUM REVIEWED

HAVING EARNED THE nickname Queen of Soul, it seemed like Aretha Franklin could reign forever. In long-running collaboration with producer Jerry Wexler, she kept racking up Top 10 R&B hits and Grammys; over the next few years, she made conquering side trips into rock songs and back to her roots in gospel. Then she wandered into the wilderness—and she's spent the past few decades getting lost, found and lost again. The majesty of her voice has never entirely abandoned her, but her legendary lapses in taste—and her habit of trying to repeat the formula of her successful albums—resulted in a string of dire records. Even as she was faltering, though, she became the archetype for the "soul diva" genre: Singers from Mary J. Blige to Alicia Keys have built careers on her combination of gospel-based vocal pyrotechnics and imperfectly guarded emotional vulnerability. Franklin caught a second wind in the mid-'80s, reinventing herself as a pop star, MTV regular and inveterate duetter, though she was less successful when she tried to move back to R&B in the '90s. And she's released only two new albums in the last 15 years; the long-in-the-works *Aretha: A Woman Falling Out of Love* is due sometime this year.

Aretha Franklin, sparking the great gold-lamé shortage of 1981.

ESSENTIAL

SPIRIT IN THE DARK

RHINO/ATLANTIC, 1970

✪✪✪✪✪

Franklin refused to explain what the title track meant—"it's very, very personal," she has said—but there's clearly a carnal meaning beyond the Holy Spirit. Partly recorded at the *This Girl's in Love With You* sessions, this is a much more hopeful, even celebratory, record about moving past an old love: She had a new partner (photographer Ken Cunningham) and a new baby, and wrote four songs herself. The album spawned two hit singles (at the time, it was "only" two), the crew of mostly Southern musicians is loose and rollicking, and the singing is effortlessly spectacular.

Download: "Spirit in the Dark," "Don't Play That Song," "When the Battle Is Over"

LIVE AT FILLMORE WEST

RHINO/ATLANTIC, 1971

✪✪✪✪✪

A calculated (and totally successful) attempt to sell Franklin to white hippies: a grand, showbizzy performance at a rock venue, with a repertoire incorporating Beatles, Simon & Garfunkel, Stephen Stills and Bread songs, every one of which she confidently recasts. Her band—saxophonist King Curtis's group—is hot enough that they recorded their own live album at the same shows. Go for the unedited two-disc version, on which Ray Charles turns up for a duet on "Spirit in the Dark," and they spend the next 20 minutes turning the San Francisco club into a revival meeting.

Download: "Love the One You're With," "Dr. Feelgood," "Bridge Over Troubled Water"

YOUNG, GIFTED AND BLACK

RHINO/ATLANTIC, 1972

✪✪✪✪

Mostly a collection of singles from a period when she was a hit factory, it has a lot of her familiar strategies: riveting statement of black pride (the title track), broken-hearted love song ("All the King's Horses"), rock cover rendered as gospel (Elton John's "Border Song") and questionable easy-listening cover (Burt Bacharach's "April Fools"). And then there's "Rock Steady," her best original composition, in which she takes on the funk craze and steers it straight to the pulpit.

Download: "Rock Steady," "Day Dreaming"

AMAZING GRACE

RHINO/ATLANTIC, 1972

✪✪✪✪✪

Her only multi-platinum album is also the best-selling gospel album ever. Recorded live in a Baptist church, it moves more slowly than her pop records, especially on its two-CD "complete recordings" expansion: She lingers over every word. But her singing is magnificent, and she inverts the usual sacred-to-secular formula of soul, easing songs by Marvin Gaye, Carole King and Rodgers & Hammerstein into the church—which, as her preacher father points out here, she'd never really left.

Download: "Never Grow Old," "How I Got Over," "Precious Memories"

ARETHA'S BEST

RHINO, 2001

✪✪✪✪✪

A near-perfect introduction—16 songs spanning 1967 to 1973, four more from her 1982 to 1987 renaissance, sequenced for partying rather than chronology. It gets into some less familiar hits and makes a couple of things evident. One is that Franklin's best recordings don't only showcase her voice—they're conversations with her congregation, in the form of her band and backup singers. Another is that the subject she digs into deepest is not just love, but the trade-offs women make for it.

Download: "Spanish Harlem," "Since You've Been Gone"

Performing her legendary tribute to Big Bird.

ARETHA FRANKLIN PART 2: THE '70S TO THE PRESENT

GREAT

THIS GIRL'S IN LOVE WITH YOU

RHINO/ATLANTIC, 1970

✪✪✪✪

Her most emotionally raw album, full of songs about crushing romantic despair, recorded after a divorce from first husband Ted White—she cried while recording "Call Me" (one of four Top 5 R&B hits here). But "Son of a Preacher Man" and, reportedly, "Let It Be" had both been written with her in mind, and "Eleanor Rigby" might as well have been: She reworks it into a howling, up-tempo soul blowout.

Download: "Eleanor Rigby," "It Ain't Fair"

SPARKLE

RHINO/ATLANTIC, 1976

✪✪✪

Basically a Curtis Mayfield album with Franklin on vocals—the *Superfly* soul man wrote these songs for the characters in a minor proto-*Dreamgirls* movie, but the soundtrack is Aretha backed by his smooth, string-laden funk. It's the best material she'd gotten in years (En Vogue covered two of these songs in the '80s), and she responds with attentive, acrobatic singing.

Download: "Something He Can Feel," "Jump"

WHO'S ZOOMIN' WHO?

ARISTA, 1985

✪✪✪✪

New producer Narada Michael Walden's bright idea was recasting Franklin as a rock star, playing her off against credible Top 40 acts: Eurythmics, Carlos Santana and others. "Freeway of Love" was her pop comeback, and she's obviously having a great time—even the filler is juicy, especially the ballad "Sweet Bitter Love," which she'd first cut 20 years earlier.

Download: "Freeway of Love," "Sisters Are Doin' It for Themselves"

ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM

ARISTA, 1987

✪✪✪✪

Another live gospel set. The singing is full-throated and often spellbinding but undercut by the album's pacing—almost every song fades out, which is odd for a live record, and the speechifying by four different reverends is best programmed out. New to the Baptist repertoire: the Latin devotional "Ave Maria."

Download: "I've Been in the Storm Too Long," "Oh Happy Day"

CHECK IT OUT

HEY NOW HEY (THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SKY)

ATLANTIC, 1973

✪✪

In which she decides to stretch out, switches producers (to R&B sage Quincy Jones) and bands (to anonymous L.A. session dudes), and gets very strange. The jazz-orchestra arrangements are ambitious, but the result is kind of a mess, with embarrassing covers of the standard "Moody's Mood" and *West Side Story*'s "Somewhere," and hilariously awful cover art. Still, it's redeemed by a feathery ballad, "Angel," written by her sister Carolyn, and by its try-anything-once attitude. Out of print.

Download: "Angel"

LET ME IN YOUR LIFE

ATLANTIC, 1974

✪✪✪

After the sideways move of *Hey Now Hey*, she returned to working with Jerry Wexler for another straightforward soul record—mostly covers of recent songs, although Stevie Wonder wrote the biggest of its three R&B hits, "Until You Come Back to Me," for her. It's a decent state-of-the-star report; this time, though, she was following fashion instead of leading, and Wexler has called it "the beginning of things winding down."

Download: "Until You Come Back to Me," "With Pen in Hand"

ARETHA

ARISTA, 1980

✪✪✪

Following her show-stealing appearance in *The Blues Brothers*, she set about making a comeback. The first album on her new label features a synth-heavy makeover, plus a band including members of Toto. The ghastly power ballad "United Together" was the R&B hit, but on the up-tempo stuff—including a cover of the Doobie Brothers' "What a Fool Believes"—she musters up more passionate authority than she'd shown in years. The second of three albums with the same prosaic title. Out of print.

Download: "I Can't Turn You Loose"

JUMP TO IT

ARISTA, 1982

✪✪

Producer-singer Luther Vandross plugged Franklin into his lush, creamy formula, and it worked: The title track was her biggest single in five years, and the album went gold. She described it as "perhaps a bit more teen-oriented than some of my earlier things." Her more durable records, though, have a tone of emotional maturity. These songs are all about love, her default subject, but her singing doesn't suggest the weight of bitter experience the way it once did. Out of print.

Download: "Jump to It"

ARETHA

ARISTA, 1986

✪✪✪

Her third eponymous album (this one has an Andy Warhol cover) was her most synthesizer-dominated yet, and its plastic twinkle dates it, although Keith Richards and Ron Wood turn up to give her cover of "Jumpin' Jack Flash" a little grit. The George Michael duet "I Knew You Were Waiting (for Me)" was her first pop No. 1 since "Respect" and final Top 20 pop hit to date. From her liner notes: "Many thanks to myself for being disciplined and growing as a producer." Out of print.

Download: "I Knew You Were Waiting (for Me)," "Jumpin' Jack Flash"

A ROSE IS STILL A ROSE

ARISTA, 1998

✪✪✪

It had been seven years since her last new album, and the multi-producer sound had become de rigueur. This time, though, her collaborators were writing with her in mind—accounting for her voice's regal bearing and her older-and-wiser persona, the emotional battle scars that were more prominent than ever in her singing. Only the poignant Lauryn Hill-penned title track was much of a hit, but the album went gold anyway—and is now out of print.

Download: "A Rose Is Still a Rose," "The Woman"

TOP: EARL GIBSON/AP PHOTO

BE CAREFUL

WITH EVERYTHING I FEEL IN ME

ATLANTIC, 1974

✪✪

Disco was catching on, and Franklin responded by misplacing her sense of funk, singing like a pretty good imitation of her imitators and making an album that alternated Miami-disco rhythms with midtempo snoozers. The cover art—featuring a newly svelte Franklin showing off her cleavage in a white fur coat—got more attention than the record inside it. Out of print.

Download: "I Love Every Little Thing About You"

YOU

ATLANTIC, 1975

✪✪

Just as Natalie Cole was stealing the Queen's throne, Franklin's final collaboration with Jerry Wexler appeared. Strangely, his instinct for how to frame her voice had faded; with its session musicians and disco-lite beats, this could've been any album on the R&B racks, and the singer is on autopilot half the time. A commercial bomb, despite two minor R&B hits (one of which is about how cool DJs are—no wonder it got radio play). Out of print.

Download: "Without You"

LOVE ALL THE HURT AWAY

ARISTA, 1981

✪✪

Aretha II had worked out so well that she essentially remade the same album with different songs, once again backed up by Toto. This time, the syrupy hit ballad is the George Benson duet "Love All the Hurt Away," the '60s soul cover is "Hold On I'm Comin'," the Stones cover is "You Can't Always Get What You Want," and the pop-and-slap bass prefigures the incidental music from *Seinfeld*. Out of print.

Download: "Whole Lot of Me"

GET IT RIGHT

ARISTA, 1983

✪✪

Another sequel: Following her move from L.A. back to her hometown of Detroit, Franklin and Luther Vandross reprised the successful formula of *Jump to It* ("peaches and cream," as she put it), from its plush, immaculately prefabricated club-and-boudoir arrangements to a spoken "telephone gossip" interlude in one song. She sings elegantly but rarely gives the sense that the stakes are particularly high. Out of print.

Download: "Get It Right"

THROUGH THE STORM

ARISTA, 1989

✪✪

Her sister Carolyn had died and her brother Cecil was dying; unsurprisingly, Aretha seems barely present on this eight-song quickie, despite the state-of-the-art New Jack Swing production. All four singles are duets (with James Brown, Elton John, the Four Tops and Whitney Houston, only the last of which generates any heat), "Think (1989)" is a pointless 21-years-later remake and "Come to Me" is the same recording she'd released in 1980 on *Aretha* II. Out of print.

Download: "It Isn't, It Wasn't, It Ain't Never Gonna Be"

SO DAMN HAPPY

ARISTA, 2003

✪✪

Her disciple Mary J. Blige helped out with a few songs on this attempt to update her sound to 21st-century smooth R&B. But the tracks produced by Burt Bacharach and by Franklin are still stuck in mid-'80s midtempo-ballad mode, and the material perks up only when it points toward the church. Bad idea: a new song that shares its title with her 1968 hit "Ain't No Way."

Download: "Good News"

FOR FANS ONLY

SWEET PASSION

ATLANTIC, 1977

✪

Aside from the hit "Break It to Me Gently," which effectively created the Anita Baker–style quiet-storm sound, former Supremes songwriter Lamont Dozier overproduced these lukewarm ballads and dance tracks. A touch of her piano is the only sign that she'd ever made a deeply felt soul record. Out of print.

Download: "Break It to Me Gently"

ALMIGHTY FIRE

ATLANTIC, 1978

✪

Franklin returned to Curtis Mayfield, who was in a creative slump, for eight of these nine hookless songs. (The last is "I'm Your Speed," cowritten with her new husband, actor Glynn Turman.) She tries to work up some enthusiasm, but the title describes what's missing: her devotion to something overpowering, whether love or God. Out of print.

Download: "More Than Just a Joy"

LA DIVA

ATLANTIC, 1979

✪

Her final, worst-selling album for Atlantic is drenched in by-the-numbers disco goop—it peaked at No. 146, on the strength of what was left of her name. She sounds distracted and bored. Out of print.

Download: "Ladies Only"

WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU SWEAT

ARISTA, 1991

✪

Nine songs, eleven producers and No. 153 on the charts—the definitive end of her comeback. Franklin is occasionally accused of having no perspective on her gifts, and records like this one are why: Stinky repertoire and dollar-store production make her voice seem like it's nothing special. Out of print.

Download: "Everyday People"

FURTHER LISTENING

THE QUEEN IN WAITING: THE COLUMBIA YEARS 1960–1965

LEGACY/COLUMBIA, 2002

✪✪✪

A cunning two-disc reclamation job on her patchy-to-awful early records, reframing her as a brash, promising jazz/blues singer who dabbled less successfully in pop and R&B.

Download: "Once in a While," "Cry Like a Baby"

QUEEN OF SOUL: THE ATLANTIC RECORDINGS

RHINO/ATLANTIC, 1992

✪✪✪✪

A four-disc box featuring virtually all the good studio recordings from her '67–'79 Atlantic era, as well as a few live tracks and curios; it doesn't flow the way her best albums do, though.

Download: "You're All I Need to Get By," "Soul Serenade"

FURTHER READING

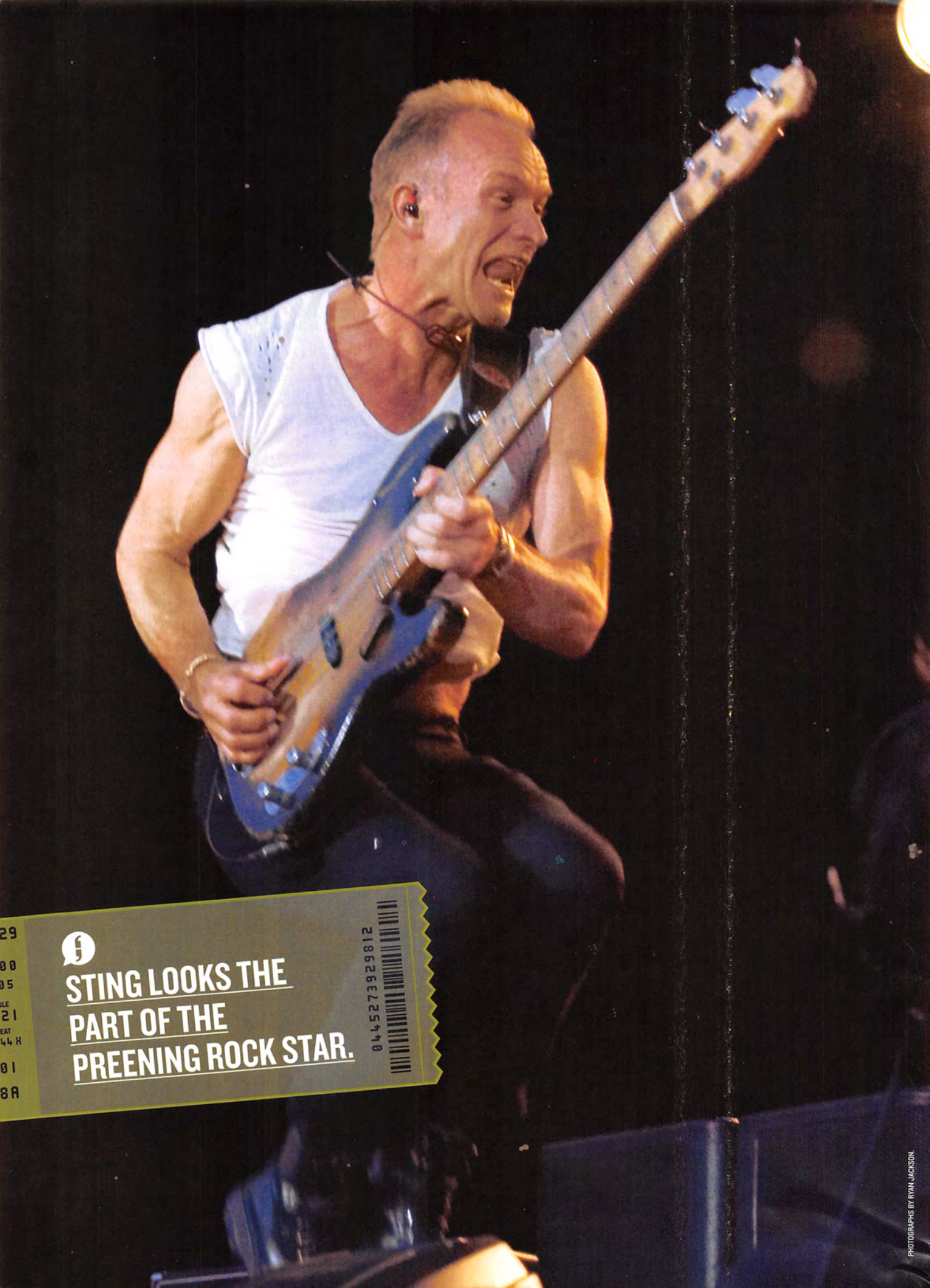
ARETHA: FROM THESE ROOTS

ARETHA FRANKLIN AND DAVID RITZ

VILLARD, 1999

✪✪✪

The Queen's autobiography illuminates the years she spent growing up in the church in Detroit but doesn't reveal much about her own music, and much of its second half is devoted to personal and professional grudges.



STING LOOKS THE PART OF THE PREENING ROCK STAR.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RYAN JACKSON.

GOOD COP BAD COP

A reunion show mired in mistakes recovers, thanks to a frontman's big-stage magnetism

THE POLICE

COMMONWEALTH STADIUM, EDMONTON, CANADA

JUNE 2, 2007 ✪✪✪✪

Combined age: 173. No wonder there are no facial close-ups.

AS A STADIUM of beer-sozzled Canucks wait for the fourth night of the Police's live reunion, the buzz is all about a vicious online review of the Vancouver show a few nights earlier. It was a "disaster" and "unbelievably lame," the blogger sneered. Guitarist Andy Summers was so lost he may as well have been "in Idaho" and Stewart Copeland made a "complete hash" of the drumming. As for "the mighty Sting": He looked "like a petulant pansy instead of the god of rock."

Slag-offs are routine online—but in this case, the blogger was Copeland himself. Just a few days into the summer's biggest tour, the Police, who split in a triangle of recriminations and ego-clashes, are already impugning each other's manhood and playing like a stoned tribute band. Ineptitude does not bode well for scalpers asking $10,000 for a fifth-row seat at Madison Square Garden.

As the Police launch into "Message in a Bottle," it seems another disaster may be beginning. Copeland's intricate hi-hat-laced drumming is sloppy, and soon Summers is MIA, bailing out for several uncomfortable measures to consult anxiously with a guitar tech. They recover slightly during the thrusting "Synchronicity II," but then comes an awkward stretch culminating in a disastrously clunky, reworked "Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic," which substitutes an airier rhythm for the original's rock downbeat. "How are you, Andy? How are you, Stewart?" Sting asks, like a concerned parent.

Some rust is understandable after a 21-year hiatus, especially because this music requires chops. The show is a reminder of what an anomaly the Police were, starting with their 1978 debut album: Arena champs who infused rock with a reggae undertow and jazz leanings, they were an odd combination of experts, adventurers and stars. In Edmonton, as they rejigger old hits, adding elaborate interludes, it becomes clear that they're one of the headier bands ever to conquer the charts, the world's biggest fusion act: Mahavishnu Sumner Orchestra.

The stage is equipped with a huge lighting rig and three screens. But the special effects are few (an animated dinosaur skeleton lumbers across the screen during "Walking in Your Footsteps"), and the videos proudly emphasize the band's dexterity: close-ups of fingers flying up fret boards and Copeland clattering out triplets on a ride cymbal.

Finally, in "Walking on the Moon," the band locks in. Dusk is settling, and the Police provide the night's first transportive moment, with Sting leading a 30,000-strong "Ay-Yo, Ay-Yo" sing-along over the languid, dub-y groove. Then it's back into hyperspace for an electrifying extended coda, as Sting answers Summers's squalling leads with extraordinarily funky and melodic improvisations in his bass's upper register.

Whether singing about psychology texts or illicit lust for teen girls, Sting is in amazing form. Even those who loathe him for his Stingly Stingishness—for his boasts of Tantric-sex prowess; for his lutes and madrigals; for his bleached-blond hair; for lyrics like "How can I save my little boy/From Oppenheimer's deadly toy?"—don't deny his musicianship and charisma. Tonight, he looks the part of the preening dickwad rock star—clad in a tight V-neck that should never be worn outside the yoga studio—but his bass playing is stunning and his singing is even better, punchy and grit-flecked on punk-influenced chestnuts like "Truth Hits Everybody" (a crowd favorite), pure-toned and croony on ballads like "Wrapped Around Your Finger."

All night long, Sting is a generous leader, ceding the spotlight and holding a solid pulse in the face of miscues. As the complexities finally mesh, he turns the encores into a lovefest, changing lyrics in "So Lonely" to honor his bandmates. "Welcome to the Andy Summers show! Welcome to the Stewart Copeland show!" he cries, before whipping off another dazzling bass fill. God of Rock? God of Prog-Pop Space-Jazz is more like it. But not at all petulant or pansy.

JODY ROSEN

THE POLICE PARKING LOT

MIKE DAVIS
20, ELECTRICIAN
EDMONTON, CANADA

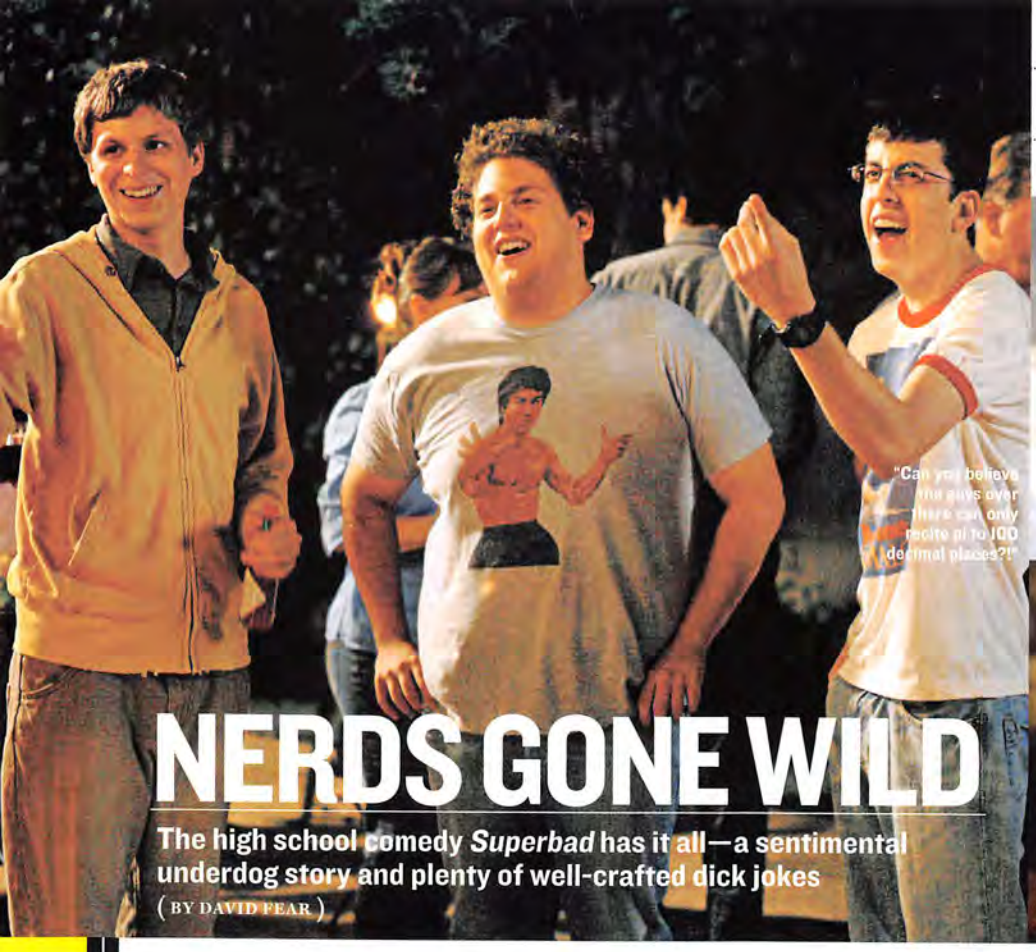
"I like the Police OK. I'm basically here to hear 'Roxanne.'"

STEPHANIE PIRNAK
20, STUDENT
EDMONTON, CANADA

"My parents got me into the Police. I want to have Tantric sex with Sting."

RODGER MYCROF
34, BUSINESS OWNER
CALGARY, CANADA

"I've been listening to the Police since high school. I paid $480 for this ticket."



"Can you believe the guys over there can only recite pi to 100 decimal places?!"

NERDS GONE WILD

The high school comedy *Superbad* has it all—a sentimental underdog story and plenty of well-crafted dick jokes

(BY DAVID FEAR)

Rocket Science: Trekkies, making the dweebs to the left look like the cast of *Ocean's Thirteen*.

The Ten's Winona Ryder: "What band did you say you were in again?"

BOYS WILL BE boys, and—if we recall the life lessons that gross-out comedies have taught us over the years—young males will be horn dogs who'll stop at nothing to get laid. **SUPERBAD** (✪✪✪½) doesn't try to reinvent the guys-behaving-badly movie; if you want *mucho* dick jokes, this is the film for you. But this ode to testosterone run amok goes down so easy that you'd feel like a cantankerous a-hole for complaining that it's superslight. In a summer crammed with toxic examples of dudes being dudes (we're talking to you, Dane Cook!), this eloquently foul-mouthed frolic manages to be sweet-natured and still bring the funny.

Seth (Jonah Hill) and Evan (*Arrested Development*'s Michael Cera) are high school losers who make Anthony Michael Hall's old gallery of dweebs look suave. But then the two hottest girls on campus invite them to a graduation party, their buddy scores a fake ID—his new name: "McLovin"—and the young men have a rare shot at knocking boots. Enter the obstacles: belligerent stoners, incompetent cops and your typical bad luck involving inconvenient drunken vomiting.

What differentiates *Superbad* from every *American Pie* clone you've seen is who's pulling the strings. Though Greg Mottola (*The Daytrippers*) is in the director's chair, the film's sensibility bears the signature of producer Judd Apatow and writer-actor Seth Rogen. The brain behind *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, Apatow is peerless in mining Y-chromosome angst for painful laughs; his protégé Rogen, who plays one of the dimwitted cops and who cowrote the script, has a gift for coming up with conversational nuggets like "No one has gotten a hand job in cargo shorts since 'Nam." Both Apatow and Rogen know how to seemlessly blend sensitivity and outrageousness, which ends up as the film's saving grace when things get sentimental toward the end. This one's not as satisfying as the duo's recent *Knocked Up*, but it's still funnier than your average frat-pack goof.

Like *Superbad*, **ROCKET SCIENCE** (✪✪) takes place on the lower rungs of high school's social hierarchy. But Jeffrey Blitz's comedy about the cutthroat world of debate teams embodies a more contemporary version of geek chic. In fact, this tale of a hopeless teen (Reece Daniel Thompson) recruited to competitive public speaking by an honor-roll Machiavelli (Anna Kendrick) apes its influences to the point of serious déjà vu. Ironic cello covers of Violent Femmes tunes, a narrator who sounds like Alec Baldwin, an overkill of prep-student quirk—did we just stumble into a mediocre Wes Anderson film? Blitz's previous work, the spelling-bee doc *Spellbound*, was compelling and funny. This fictional follow-up just feels like indie-film karaoke.

Both **THE TEN** (✪✪½) and **THE SIGNAL** (✪✪½) are movies that cater to the short attention span of the YouTube generation. The first is a collection of comic vignettes based loosely on the Ten Commandments, featuring Paul Rudd, Winona Ryder and every alumnus of MTV's *The State*. The second is a lo-fi apocalyptic horror flick about infected citizens turning into enraged sociopaths, which is divided into three chapters, each with a different director (newcomers David

THE EXCITED-O-METER

We haven't seen 'em yet ... and we're not even sure we want to

VERY EXCITED

THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM

MATT DAMON returns as the amnesiac superspy with a grudge. We predict it'll be the summer's one threequel that doesn't totally suck.

EXCITED-ISH

THE INVASION

A-listers NICOLE KIDMAN and DANIEL CRAIG battle some creepy pod people in this remake of the B-movie *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*.

NOT SO MUCH

RUSH HOUR 3

Were people really clamoring for a third chapter of this lame CHRIS TUCKER/JACKIE CHAN buddy-cop series?

SUPERBAD: MELISSA MOSELEY; ROCKET SCIENCE: JIM BRIDGES; THE TEN: THINKFILM; THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM: JASIN BOLAND/UNIVERSAL PICTURES; THE INVASION: PETER SONEL; RUSH HOUR 3: GLEN WILSON/NEW LINE CINEMA.

The Signal: "It's my party, and I'll cry blood if I want to."

The Hottest State: "What's a seven-letter word for 'disaffected hipsters'?"

Bruckner, Dan Bush and Jacob Gentry). Both films have their share of bright spots, yet neither is worth more than the sum of its parts. Consistency always becomes collateral damage in these sorts of movies, though when *The Ten*'s director David Wain (*Wet Hot American Summer*) hits on a winner—like Justin Theroux's Jesus having a fling with a mortal played by Gretchen Mol—you can almost forgive all the DOA anal-rape jokes. As for the exquisite corpse experiment that is *The Signal*, go for the first part's white-knuckle ride and split before the wink-wink attitude of the last two-thirds becomes overbearing.

Advice for actors who aspire to be serious novelists: For God's sake, don't try to direct the screen adaptation, too. That's the main lesson to be learned from **THE HOTTEST STATE** (✪½), in which slacker poster boy Ethan Hawke turns his own literary effort into an equally noxious date movie. Following the relationship between a self-involved actor (Mark Webber, blatantly imitating the real Hawke) and the woman (Catalina Sandino Moreno) who eventually breaks his heart, this semiautobiographical drama about romantic ups and downs turns into an exercise in whiny narcissism. When Hawke shows up, playing the protagonist's deadbeat dad, it's hard to watch the awful meta-Oedipal drama play out. A more objective director might have brought something to the table other than the repetitive picking of old emotional scabs.

THE SIGNAL: MAGNOLIA PICTURES; 300: WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT INC.; FLAMING LIPS: J. MICHELLE MARTIN; COOPER: RICHARD LEWIS/WIREIMAGE; HOTTEST STATE: MACALL B. POLAY; INLAND EMPIRE: ABSURDA.

BLENDER APPROVED

Missed them in the theater? Catch them on DVD.

300

Spartan warriors defend their empire in this visually stunning ode to hot gladiator-on-gladiator action.

INLAND EMPIRE

In director David Lynch's latest headtrip, a Los Angeles actress goes through the looking glass.

LAST GOOD MOVIE YOU SAW?

ALICE COOPER

"*Grindhouse*. It didn't make you cry or think about politics or war or anything remotely serious. It was just about killing zombies and crazy car stunts."

MUSIC DVDS

The Flaming Lips: "We'd like to thank our sponsor, Carl's Confetti Emporium!"

ANIMAL PLANET

Weirdo rockers the Flaming Lips bring their space-age theatrics to their hometown zoo

(BY RYAN DOMBAL)

THE FLAMING LIPS

U.F.O.S AT THE ZOO: THE LEGENDARY CONCERT IN OKLAHOMA CITY *(WARNER BROS.)*

✪✪✪✪

"WE'RE ALIENS FROM outer space," declares Flaming Lips frontman Wayne Coyne in this euphoric concert film. "To call us a 'band' is not giving us our full due." *U.F.O.s at the Zoo* has no problem supporting the singer's bold claim. These Oklahoma City freak-rock journeymen take utter joy in turning their gigs into out-of-this-world operas filled with torch-wielding Santas, fake blood and heaps of confetti. Filmed last year at their hometown zoo's amphitheater, this DVD features the entire live Lips extravaganza—including Coyne rolling onto the stage in a big bubble from atop a Funkadelic-style mother ship—plus lots of goofy behind-the-scenes footage and quasi-religious fan testimonials that get to the core of the Lips' whacked-out appeal.

THE BEST OF THE REST

ROCK THE BELLS
(WARNER BROS.) ✪✪✪
This surprisingly gripping documentary chronicles idealistic concert promoter Chang Weisberg's formidable quest to reunite all nine members of the Wu-Tang Clan for 2004's Rock the Bells concert in San Bernardino, California. Though the lack of actual Wu performance footage is a letdown, the film doubles as a dramatic eulogy for near-no-show Ol' Dirty Bastard, who passed away four months after the gig.

YOU'RE GONNA MISS ME: A FILM ABOUT ROKY ERICKSON
(PALM) ✪✪✪✪
As the singer for '60s psychedelic rockers the 13th Floor Elevators, Roky Erickson embodied the era's sex, drugs and rock & roll (and more drugs) lifestyle. Filmmaker Keven McAlester details Erickson's troubled family life, his descent into schizophrenia and his partial recovery. Despite Erickson's unlikely career resurrection (he returned to the stage in 2005), the message is clear: Kids, don't do drugs.

THIS IS TOM JONES VOL. I: ROCK 'N' ROLL LEGENDS
(TIME LIFE VIDEO)
✪✪✪
The nine versions of "It's Not Unusual" included in this three-disc set highlighting Tom Jones's late-'60s/early-'70s variety show are probably too much for even the Welsh singer's most fervent, panty-throwing fans. While Jones's sexy-swagger shtick can get tired, stunning guest performances from the likes of Stevie Wonder and Janis Joplin help liven things up.

SPECIAL 30TH ANNIVERSARY RELEASE

28 CLASSIC TRACKS ON 2 CDS

INCLUDES VINTAGE FOLDOUT CONCERT POSTER

THE POLICE

ALSO AVAILABLE

TO GET POLICE RINGTONES FOR YOUR PHONE, TEXT:

POLICE5A to 30303 to get EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE
POLICE5B to 30303 to get EVERY LITTLE THING SHE DOES IS MAGIC
POLICE5C to 30303 to get MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE
POLICE5D to 30303 to get ROXANNE
POLICE5E to 30303 to get DON'T STAND SO CLOSE TO ME

Not available/compatible on all carriers or handsets. Internet-enabled wireless phones are required to download purchases.
UMG will not give refunds for downloads to incompatible phones or carriers. All charges are one time fees with no subscriptions obligation.
Charges will be billed on your wireless phone bill or deducted from your prepaid balance. Standard messaging rates, additional fees, terms and conditions apply.

WWW.ILOVETHATSONG.COM/POLICE

UMe A&M
A UNIVERSAL MUSIC COMPANY

© 2007 Universal Music Enterprises, a Division of UMG Recordings, Inc.

AVAILABLE AT BEST BUY

Not even Al Gore foresaw the advent of global warming in video games.

TOUCHDOWN!

A college-football game so realistic that your custom player actually has to maintain a 2.0 GPA (BY LIBE GOAD)

NCAA FOOTBALL 08

EA SPORTS; PS2, PS3, XBOX 360

✪✪✪✪

GRID-IRON GREATNESS!

COMPARED TO EA Sports' best-selling *Madden* juggernaut, the publisher's *NCAA Football* series has always been something of a second stringer. But for the '08 version of *NCAA Football*, EA is upping the ante. Instead of relying on the last installment's eye candy (bouncing cheerleaders and kooky mascots), the new version's focus is on refined controls, technical prowess and a multiyear, single-player career mode.

NCAA 08 boasts a new animation system that lets characters shift between pre-set moves on the fly, so that mid-air collisions, gang tackles and one-handed catches are more fluid than ever. Controller sensitivity has been ratcheted up—allowing players to dodge and dash with the slightest touch—as has tackling precision. Game-time weather, courtesy of an online feed from the Weather Channel, boosts the realism even further.

The heart of any football game is its career mode, and *NCAA 08* offers a largely improved, though sometimes tedious, Campus Legends mode. A custom-created player starts out in high school and has to work his way up to all-star. As if reliving high school weren't difficult enough, between college games, your alter ego will have to decide which off-the-field activities to invest time in: working out, playing pickup basketball or hitting the books. A 2.0 GPA is required to stay on the team, and no, unlike in real life, the nerd in the next dorm room isn't going to take the tests for you.

GIZMO OF THE MONTH

DREAMAUTHENTICS KATANA

Play ye olde arcade classics *and* listen to your newfangled MP3s on this tabletop powerhouse

If your childhood dream of having a collection of coin-op arcade machines in the rec room never worked out, this plug-in-and-play tabletop version might be the next best thing. The cabinet boasts a 17-inch monitor, a joystick and a trackball, and can be customized with different marquees, button layouts and even a light gun. The DreamAuthentics Katana comes preloaded with more than 200 games ranging from arcade classics like *Centipede* and *Ms. Pac-Man* to Atari 2600 joints *Combat* and *Yars' Revenge*. There's basic PC hardware and a standard optical drive inside the box, so it can also play DVDs, CDs, MP3s and newer PC games. Too bad it doesn't have a coin slot so that friends and family can help defray the unit's hefty $2,500 price tag one quarter at a time.

Yet another reason to never leave your parents' basement.

TRANSFORMERS

GUITAR HERO ENCORE

TRANSFORMERS: THE GAME

ACTIVISION; PC, PS2, PS3, Wii, XBOX 360

✪✪½

The *Transformers* movie feels a lot like a video game, so it seems appropriate that the tie-in game feels a lot like a summer blockbuster—flashy, loud and vapid. The ability to choose between saving humanity as the good-guy Autobots or laying waste to cities as the evil Decepticons adds a touch of moral ambiguity to the otherwise predictable, but satisfyingly crunchy, robot-on-robot fighting action.

GUITAR HERO ENCORE: ROCKS THE '80S

REDOCTANE; PS2

✪✪✪✪

It's the same *Guitar Hero* you know and love, just with bigger hair, tighter spandex and more rock anthems from the Reagan era. While most of the acts—including Poison, Skid Row, Ratt, the Police, Oingo Boingo and Eddie Money—show up in sound-alike form, A Flock of Seagulls and Twisted Sister play on their own tracks.

NINJA GAIDEN SIGMA

TECMO; PS3

✪✪✪✪½

Even experienced action-game aficionados will have a tough time with this martial-arts experience, where just getting to the next level poses a huge challenge. A remake of the 2005 Xbox classic *Ninja Gaiden Black*, the PS3 version gets a high-definition graphical makeover, plus some new moves and weapons, including awesome twin katanas >>

NINJA GAIDEN SIGMA

TRAXXPAD

MANHUNT 2

TENCHU Z

named Dragon's Claw and Tiger's Fang.

MANHUNT 2

ROCKSTAR GAMES: PSP, PS2, Wii

✪✪½

This stealth-action game boasts more "it's just wrong" scenarios—ranging from sawing enemies in half to yanking their balls off—than an Eli Roth film. The nonsensical plot about a vengeful amnesiac feels like a halfhearted attempt to justify all the over-the-top bloodletting. And, gore aside, the game feels stale, with blocky graphics and gameplay that has barely evolved from the original.

TRAXXPAD: PORTABLE STUDIO

EIDOS: PSP

✪✪✪

Play mix master on the go with this music maker for the handheld PSP. Choose from 1,000 mostly cheesy sounds, or use a headset mic to record original, if muffled, samples. Tweaking and layering the tracks using the tiny sequencer interface can be awkward; the real fun is exporting the final product as an MP3, uploading it to MySpace and waiting for the underground buzz to begin.

TENCHU Z

MICROSOFT: XBOX 360

✪✪

Having failed to change with the times, the *Tenchu* series of ninja stealth-action games has been in steep decline since the original PS1 hit. This Xbox 360 version makes some improvements, notably a build-a-ninja mode and online cooperative play. But the unpredictable artificial intelligence—enemies mysteriously veer from brain-dead to dead-on in an instant—will trip up even the most skilled assassin.

BLENDER APPROVED

The best games from the past months

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END

DISNEY INTERACTIVE: PC, PS2, XBOX 360

Visually stunning and pitch-perfect—down to the wooden acting.

PUZZLE QUEST: CHALLENGE OF THE WARLORDS

D3: DS, PSP, XBOX 360

This mash-up of *Tetris* and *D&D* is pure nerd crack.

The Used's Jeph Howard, recreational Novocain user.

GEEK FILES

This month, Jeph Howard, bassist for screamo heroes THE USED, proudly lets his dweeb flag fly

Favorite classic game

The Legend of Zelda. I even named my dog Zelda. I've always been into role-playing games—I'm an ultra-nerd.

A Used game would look like ...

We'd be on a Used quest. There would be monsters trying to kill the band members on the way to the show. We'd have weapons like an ax bass, a guitar whose neck is actually a sword you pull off, drumsticks sharpened like stakes and cymbals that you could throw like ninja stars. And [singer] Bert [McCracken] would just eat people.

Postshow pastime: games or groupies?

Games, because my girlfriend would kick my ass. She actually buys me games so I will stay away from groupies.

Cherished video-game memory

When I was in Japan, a friend and I went to Akihabara, which is the center of nerds in Tokyo. We went to a maid cafe, where you can eat all the candy you want and play video games with these cutesy, anime-looking girls in little maid outfits. It was awesome. You pay by the half hour. It's like an extremely innocent escort service.

Gaming drug of choice

Wii and weed together are cool, but that's pretty much it. I drink sometimes, but that's not really much fun when you're playing games.

Geek rating, on a scale of 1 to 10

Twenty-seven. Can I go up that high? I'm a bass nerd, too. Usually I play a game, pause it, play bass for a little bit, stop doing that and unpause the game. I have ADD sometimes, but learning to multitask like that has helped. *Mark Yarm*

BLENDER (ISSN 1534-0554) Volume 6, Number 7, is published monthly with a combined issue in January/February by Dennis Publishing Inc., 1040 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10018. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send change of address to BLENDER, P.O. Box 420234, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0234. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to P.O. Box 503, RPO West Beaver Creek, Richmond Hill, ON, L4B 4R6. One-year subscription rates: For U.S. $15.94, for Canada $25.94, for all other countries $35.94 in prepaid U.S. funds. We sometimes make our subscriber list available to companies that sell goods and services by mail that we believe would interest our readers. If you would rather not receive such mailings, please send us a note with your current mailing label or address to: Blender Customer Service, P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235. Printed in the U.S.A.

THE USED: THOMAS CONCORDIA/WIREIMAGE

THIS SUMMER, BLENDER.COM STARS IN

ATTACK OF THE AWESOME

Surf our Internets for awesome exclusive video, awesome Web weirdness and up-to-the-awesome-minute news on your favorite artists.

It's CTRL + ALT + AWESOME!

PLUS...

ROPEX®

The Original Swedish "Ropes" Formula

- Increased Ejaculate Volume
- Experience Stronger Orgasms
- Faster Recovery For Second Orgasm
- Maintain Strong Sexual Health

MONEY-BACK 30 DAY GUARANTEE

All Natural Formula
No Prescription Necessary

Developed in Sweden the all natural ROPEX® formula has been recommended by European and Asian doctors for the improvement of sexual function and libido as well as prostate strength which is key to strong sexuality. Used by over 5 million men worldwide to intensify orgasms and increase ejaculate volume, creating the "ropes" effect of streaming ejaculate.

Order at: www.RopexUSA.com or Call Toll Free (888) 799-6979 (24/7)

checks accepted by mail

Orders By Mail; Send To:
New Generation Labs
12905 S.W. 132 Street, Suite 4
Miami, FL 33186

1 Ropex; $39.95 +$4.95 Shipping = $44.90
Special Offer: Order 2 Ropex, Receive 3 bottles!
$79.90+$5.95 Shipping = $85.85

Local Text Dating!

FIND A TEXT PARTNER IN YOUR AREA!

FEATURED PROFILES

Easton (KS) BLB 10023
Batesville (TX) BLG 78829
Bowden (WV) BLG 26254
Edmond (OK) BLG 73083
Okolona (OH) BLG 43550
San Diego (CA) BLG 29190
Genesee (PA) BLG 16941
Pittsburgh (PA) BLG 15234
Annapolis (MD) BLG 26772
Fredonia (AZ) BLB 860
Wynot (NE)
Newington (CT) 131

83% Match Rate!

More then MEMBERS 80.000

Looking for a girl/women in your area?
Txt BLG + YOUR ZIP CODE to 46898
Looking for a guy/men in your area?
Txt BLB + YOUR ZIP CODE to 46898

FIND YOUR MATCH ONLINE AT:
WWW.LOCALTEXTDATING.COM

Text Chat Service 18+, terms of use at www.mobdesk.com. You are billed at 0.99 (T-Mobile, Verizon & Cellular One) 1.50 (All other carriers), per received message (+default charges). To opt out, send STOP to 46898

take 50% Off and get a *free gift!

*Just enter this code OFF41 at checkout!

adameve.com

Americas Most Trusted Source For Adult Products.

ADULT DVDs ADULT TOYS ADULT NOVELTIES

TOTALLY FREE TALK!

LIVE
1-ON-1 CHAT
GROUP CHAT
24/7
THOUSANDS CALL DAILY!

1-206-666-TALK
1-270-400-CHAT

www.totallyfreetalk.com

Must be over 18. LD rates may apply.

MAKE YOUR OWN STICKERS

Freedom of Speech!

SAY WHATEVER YOU WANT @ STICKERJUNKIE.COM

ENTER PROMOCODE: BLENDER

ROCKABILIA.COM

YOUR MUSIC MERCHANDISE SOURCE

OVER 40,000 ITEMS FROM YOUR FAVORITE BANDS

TEE SHIRTS • BABYDOLLS • LONGSLEEVES • BEANIES
HOODED SWEATSHIRTS • BELT BUCKLES • WRISTBANDS
EMBROIDERED CAPS • POSTERS • PATCHES • BACK PACKS
NECKLACES • DVDS • STICKERS • WALLETS • AND MORE...

Free 120 page catalog call 952-556-1121 write: PO Box 39 Dept 391 • Chanhassen MN

DEEZ TEEZ

FUNNY T-SHIRTS ONLY $13.99!

damn it feels good to be a gangster.

where my hose at?

TEAM RAMROD

VISIT US AT WWW.DEEZTEEZ.COM/BLENDER

English Laundry

To be worn mainly with Denim, and never ...under any circumstances with a tie. Check out the shirts that guarantee you score at www.englishlaundry.com Enter code "blenderEL" to receive a 10% discount through 8/31/07

www.englishlaundry.com

At-Home Fitness REDEFINED.

INTRODUCING THE BOWFLEX REVOLUTION® HOME GYM

Cutting Edge Design Delivers Incredible Results

You've never experienced a home strength machine like this! How is the Bowflex Revolution® Home Gym different?

Our smooth SpiraFlex® resistance feels just like traditional strength equipment, but packs it into revolutionary lightweight plates!

Lightweight SpiraFlex® resistance plate

And, by using the adjustable Freedom Arms™ you can quickly change the angle of resistance, increasing exercise effectiveness.

Plus, with over 100 exercises available, the Bowflex Revolution® provides exceptional workout versatility.

The result? An easier AND more efficient workout that's GUARANTEED† to give you a better body in just 6 weeks.

Exceptional Standard Features Transform Your Body in Just 20 Minutes a Day, 3 Times a Week:

- Up to 220 lbs. of resistance (upgrades available!)
- Space-efficient fold-up design
- Leg extension/leg curl station
- Built-in rowing machine
- Preacher curl attachment
- Leg press plate
- 10-year limited warranty
- 100% Satisfaction Guarantee†

AS LOW AS $42/MONTH*

Experience the Revolution!

CALL (800) 987-3733

TO REQUEST A FREE DVD OR TO PLACE YOUR ORDER TODAY.

www.bowflexrevoinfo.com

* On approved Bowflex™ credit card purchases. The advertised payment is based on a promotional minimum payment of 1.5% of purchase price. The amount of your total Minimum Monthly Payment will depend on additional purchases and account balances. See Cardholder Agreement and Disclosure Statement for details. Call 1.888.367.4310 or review your cardholder agreement for information. Estimated monthly payments do not include taxes, and shipping and handling.

† 100% Satisfaction Guarantee includes full refund of purchase price, less shipping and handling. Call for details. If you decide to return your Bowflex Revolution™ machine, simply call (800) 605-3369 within 6 weeks to ask for a return authorization number. Machine and accessories must be returned in original condition and packaging, and postmarked no later than 2 weeks after date of return authorization.

© 2007 Nautilus, Inc. All rights reserved. Bowflex, the Bowflex logo, and Bowflex Revolution are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Nautilus, Inc. SpiraFlex is a registered trademark of SpiraFlex, Inc. (0807) P0807BLENDREDEF

BOWFLEX REVOLUTION

The shit-talking *King of Queens* sidekick has a new comedy CD on Sub Pop. He says he loves shotguns and 'shrooms. Now carefully lower your weapon and tell us ...

By RJ SMITH ✱ *Photograph by* TURE LILLEGRAVEN

WHO DOES PATTON OSWALT THINK HE IS?

So Patton, what does your self-portrait mean?

I'm illustrating all of my weaknesses. Starting with my overall weakness for giant women, moving on to my love of Scotch, and then Cheetos and all bad food, and finally my love of comic books, which is at the center of the target. On top is me, smiling and trying to be goofy while bullets are flying at me. And you get a thousand points if you hit my double chin!

Giant women, huh?

I don't know where that fetish comes from, man.

Why are you smiling while people are trying to kill you?

It's a very tight smile, a you-may-as-well-smile smile. Basically, if you smile, you'll have fewer enemies. I'm not into retaliation; I just want to be peaceful.

Not many comics love firearms as much as you do.

The guy at the shooting range today said, "An armed society is a polite society." And I think politeness is the bedrock of peacefulness. So maybe everybody should be strapped.

What's the next gun you want?

I'll *definitely* get a shotgun. Shotguns are so much fun. I can't play guitar, but with a pistol-grip Mossberg in my hand, I can pretend.

What reality show would you most want to be on?

I hate reality TV so much. Honestly, the fact that it's called "reality TV" is such an insult to reality. These programs exist just to reassure people: "Look at these assholes, I could do that." I would only want to be on reality TV if I could commit suicide or kill somebody.

So much for being peaceful. Who would you shoot?

The producers and judges on *Last Comic Standing*. I would use one of those automatic shotguns, and just keep going until the barrel melted. Shows like that and *American Idol* are really popular, but the shows that take skill aren't popular. I watch *Top Chef*, and I know I could never do that, which is why I love it.

If we drug-tested you, what would we find?

If you'd drug-tested me a few years ago, you would have found a lot of mushrooms, traces of LSD, a light sprinkling of pot. I think I'd legalize mushrooms before I'd legalize pot. I like mind-expanding stuff, not heart-quickening stuff. But these days, it's pretty much just Scotch and wine. Not that I've sworn off anything ...

Elvis Presley or Frank Sinatra?

Sinatra overcame more failure, but Elvis took more risks. But endurance is more important than truth, so I'm going with Sinatra.

Talk us through the worst haircut of your life.

The haircut I had on the first TV show I ever did as a stand-up, in 1992. I looked so dykey. I looked more like a lesbian than Sabrina Matthews or Lea DeLaria could ever hope to be. I was the hottest lesbian comic on TV.

If you had absolute power for 20 minutes, what would you do?

I would give everybody deep, deep wisdom. And I would give myself the permanent ability to live without sleep.

What do comics get away with that the rest of us can't?

A lot more disgust. [BLENDER]

"SHOTGUNS ARE SO MUCH FUN."

STYLING: JESSICA B. SIMPSON; GROOMING: CHERIE COMBS FOR MARGARETMALDONADO.COM; LOCATION: OAK TREE GUN CLUB; T-SHIRT: WORNFREE.

Enter for a chance to win $25,000

SAVE UP TO 89%

☐ **YES!** Send me 18 issues for just $10.00 - only 55¢ an issue. And, enter me in the sweepstakes for a chance to **WIN $25,000!**

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS / APT. #

CITY / STATE / ZIP

☐ Or, get 36 issues for just $19.97 - only 55¢ an issue and enter me in the sweepstakes.

☐ **No,** I do not wish to subscribe to BLENDER, but please enter me in the sweepstakes.

○ Payment enclosed ○ Bill me later

6708NA

Canadian orders, add $10 per year in U.S. funds (inc. GST). Foreign orders, add $20 per year in U.S. funds. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery of first issue. Cover price is $4.99. Blender is published 11 times per year.

BLENDER

SAVE UP TO 89%

☐ **YES!** Send me 18 issues for just $10.00 - only 55¢ an issue. And, enter me in the sweepstakes for a chance to **WIN $25,000!**

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS / APT. #

CITY / STATE / ZIP

☐ Or, get 36 issues for just $19.97 - only 55¢ an issue and enter me in the sweepstakes.

☐ **No,** I do not wish to subscribe to BLENDER, but please enter me in the sweepstakes.

○ Payment enclosed ○ Bill me later

6708NB

Canadian orders, add $10 per year in U.S. funds (inc. GST). Foreign orders, add $20 per year in U.S. funds. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery of first issue. Cover price is $4.99. Blender is published 11 times per year.

BLENDER

Visit our website at
www.blender.com

NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 288 FLAGLER BEACH FL

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

BLENDER
PO BOX 421250
PALM COAST FL 32142-9065

Visit our website at
www.blender.com

NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 288 FLAGLER BEACH FL

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

BLENDER
PO BOX 421250
PALM COAST FL 32142-9065

Enter for a chance to win

$25,000

NO PURCHASE, PAYMENT, SALES PRESENTATION, OR CONTRIBUTION NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN THE DREAM OF A LIFETIME SWEEPSTAKES.

Sweepstakes begins 10/15/06; ends 1/31/08. Sweepstakes open to legal United States and Canadian residents and to residents of other countries and U.S. territories and possessions only where offered & permitted by law. Void where prohibited by law. Official rules, which govern this Sweepstakes, available in this issue or by writing to: "Dream of a Lifetime Sweepstakes" Official Rules, c/o Ventura Associates Inc. Customer Service, 1040 6th Avenue, New York, NY 10018. Sweepstakes registered by Ventura Associates, Inc., 1040 6th Ave., NY, NY 10018 & may be presented in different creative presentations by different organizations (the "Presenting Promoter(s)").

Enter for a chance to win $25,000

SAVE UP TO 89%

☐ **YES!** Send me 18 issues for just $10.00 - only 55¢ an issue. And, enter me in the sweepstakes for a chance to **WIN $25,000!**

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS / APT. #

CITY / STATE / ZIP

☐ Or, get 36 issues for just $19.97 - only 55¢ an issue and enter me in the sweepstakes.

☐ **No,** I do not wish to subscribe to BLENDER, but please enter me in the sweepstakes.

○ Payment enclosed ○ Bill me later

6708NA

Canadian orders, add $10 per year in U.S. funds (inc. GST). Foreign orders, add $20 per year in U.S. funds. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery of first issue. Cover price is $4.99. Blender is published 11 times per year.

BLENDER

SAVE UP TO 89%

☐ **YES!** Send me 18 issues for just $10.00 - only 55¢ an issue. And, enter me in the sweepstakes for a chance to **WIN $25,000!**

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS / APT. #

CITY / STATE / ZIP

☐ Or, get 36 issues for just $19.97 - only 55¢ an issue and enter me in the sweepstakes.

☐ **No,** I do not wish to subscribe to BLENDER, but please enter me in the sweepstakes.

○ Payment enclosed ○ Bill me later

6708NB

Canadian orders, add $10 per year in U.S. funds (inc. GST). Foreign orders, add $20 per year in U.S. funds. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery of first issue. Cover price is $4.99. Blender is published 11 times per year.

BLENDER

Visit our website at www.blender.com

NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 288 FLAGLER BEACH FL

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

BLENDER

PO BOX 421250
PALM COAST FL 32142-9065

Visit our website at www.blender.com

NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 288 FLAGLER BEACH FL

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

BLENDER

PO BOX 421250
PALM COAST FL 32142-9065

Enter for a chance to win

$25,000

NO PURCHASE, PAYMENT, SALES PRESENTATION, OR CONTRIBUTION NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN THE DREAM OF A LIFETIME SWEEPSTAKES.

Sweepstakes begins 10/15/06; ends 1/31/08. Sweepstakes open to legal United States and Canadian residents and to residents of other countries and U.S. territories and possessions only where offered & permitted by law. Void where prohibited by law. Official rules, which govern this Sweepstakes, available in this issue or by writing to: "Dream of a Lifetime Sweepstakes" Official Rules, c/o Ventura Associates Inc. Customer Service, 1040 6th Avenue, New York, NY 10018. Sweepstakes registered by Ventura Associates, Inc., 1040 6th Ave., NY, NY 10018 & may be presented in different creative presentations by different organizations (the "Presenting Promoter(s)").

©2007 Wm. Wrigley Jr. Co.

When mint and a hint of fruit come together, things get interesting.

ACTIVATE YOUR AWESOME

SHAPE SHIFTER

CALL IT OCEAN. DON'T CALL IT A PHONE.™

Ocean's innovative design makes it the world's first dual-slider with both a numeric keypad and a separate full QWERTY keyboard. Which means it's perfect for making a call, banging out an email or typing an instant message. And on an advanced nationwide 3G network, you'll truly enjoy Ocean's new HTML browser plus incredible access to all your IMs, text/pic messages and emails in one simple place. We're talking Yahoo!,® AOL,® Windows Live,™ Gmail.™ You can even sync your Microsoft® Office Outlook® email, contacts and calendar right there on your Ocean. Which makes it clear. Two shapes really are better than one.

www.helio.com

Don't blame us for third-party content or services. Our super-advanced 3G service is available in select locations in the red states, the blue states and even the green states. Some features are network, condition and device dependent and are not available in all areas or on all devices. Service is subject to Helio's Membership Terms. Some restrictions apply, but not too many. See your Helio representative for the few that do. Some features may not be available at this time, but are coming soon. Helio, the Helio logo, Ocean and "Don't Call It a Phone" are trademarks of Helio LLC. AOL is a registered trademark of AOL LLC and all other marks are the property of their respective owners. For more information on Helio, visit www.helio.com. And congrats, you're the only person who's made it this far. ©2007 Helio LLC.